Today's
The Herald-Palladium
included inside

Buchanan girls beat Cassopolis
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# Dowagiac News

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# DUS November students of the month announced

**By MAXWELL HARDEN**
max.harden@leaderpub.com

DOWAGIAC — Six local students have been selected for recognition by teachers and faculty for their outstanding performance in school this November.

Dowagiac Union Schools recognized its November Students of the Month during its Board of Education meeting Monday.

Nominated by teachers and faculty from their respective schools in the Dowagiac Union Schools district, Breah Hannapel, Stella Franklin, Maverick Stewart, Ethan Sowers, Lorenzo DiStefano, Cruz Hyatt and Mindy Jimenez received plaques and T-shirts with their names on them for their accomplishments and attitudes in the classroom. While technical issues delayed the printing of commemorative T-shirts, school officials expect to distribute them before the upcoming winter break.

Breah Hannapel, a 15-year-old sophomore at Dowagiac Union High School, was introduced by Principal Kelly Millin and teacher Miss Spade. Hannapel holds a perfect 4.0 GPA while taking honors and college courses through Southwestern Michigan College. A varsity letter winner in competitive cheer, she was also named senior ballet dancer of the year for 2024 and 2025 by the MMC dance team. She is the daughter of Eric and Jamie Hannapel.

Stella Franklin, a sixth-grader at Dowagiac Middle School, was introduced by Principal Greg Guernsey and nominated for being an "empathetic, compassionate and supportive student." Franklin, the daughter of Ashley and Brandon Franklin, is involved in dance, acting, volleyball and playing the trumpet. Stafford said that Franklin stands out for her determination and her habit of wishing staff and classmates a good day at the end of every school day.

Maverick Stewart, a third grader at Kincheloe Elementary School, was recognized by Principal Ryan Zietlow and teacher Mackenzie Mroczek. The son of Dowagiac Fire Chief Tony Stewart and Natasha Stewart, Maverick was cited as a "Chieftain Hero" for his helpfulness and work ethic. Outside of school, he enjoys racing his go-kart and camping at Bear Cave Campground in Buchanan.

Third-grader Ethan Sowers was named the November student of the month for Justus Gage Elementary. Principal Brian Henry said that Sowers assists staff by cleaning up playground equipment and helping classmates. Henry said that Sowers, the son of Christopher and Lynn Sowers, wants to become either a professional wrestler or a mechanical engineer when he grows up.

Lorenzo DiStefano, a third grader at Sister Lakes Elementary, was recognized alongside his teacher, Lynne Seppala. Known for his thoroughness in the classroom, DiStefano enjoys spending time on his family's farm with his pet pig, Pig Squeak. The son of Amelia and Darren DiStefano, he hopes to become a veterinarian one day.

Cruz Hyatt represented Patrick Hamilton Elementary as its third-grade honoree. Teacher Stephanie Hill chose Hyatt for his hard work in reading and his commitment to the school's "hero expectations." The son of Danielle and Zachary Hyatt, Cruz is a multi-sport athlete who plays basketball, football, soccer and baseball.

## SMC VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS HOSTS FALL VOCAL STUDIO RECITAL

Photo provided

Twenty-three vocalists sang Dec. 10 at Southwestern Michigan College Visual and Performing Arts' fall vocal studio recital in the theatre of the Dale A. Lyons Building on the Dowagiac campus.Singing were: Anthony Martinez, Asia Twum, Cadence Hightree, Zoie Wood, Rylei Thielmann, Delaney Tannehill, Grace Bruntz, Grace Phillips, Izaiah Mallo, Jersey Baker, Lauren Lovell, Leah Martin, Lucian Preston, Madison Packer, Matthew McGrew, Mikayla Pease, Nick Shelton, Ollie Shafer, P.J. Fraczek, Payton Tucker, Jillian Torbet, Ben Plested, Coby Henslee. David Carew is SMC Director of Choral Activities. Studio voice instructor is Matthew Daniel, tenor. Collaborative pianists Christine Larson Seitz and Marcello Martins accompanied performers.

# CFC names Mobile Health Clinic's new LMSW

**SUBMITTED**

CASSOPOLIS — Cass Family Clinic has announced the appointment of Rachel Schiman who will serve as the licensed master social worker for its Mobile Health Clinic heading into 2026.

Schiman joins Cass Family Clinic after working at Geriatric Connections in St. Joseph. She holds a Bachelor of Social Work degree from Texas State University and a Master of Social Work degree from Texas State University.

Since mid-November, the Mobile Health Clinic has been seeing patients and bringing primary care and wellness services directly to communities across Berrien and Cass counties, including Marcellus, Three Oaks, Vandalia, Edwardsburg, Union, Sister Lakes, Niles, Decatur, and Jones.

SCHIMAN

"I'm thrilled to join Cass Family Clinic and continue providing social work services through the Mobile Health Clinic," said Schiman. "The Mobile Health Clinic is meeting critical healthcare needs in communities across Southwest Michigan, and I'm proud to be part of an effort that expands access to care."

The Mobile Health Clinic provides another avenue for residents to access quality, compassionate healthcare close to home, offering health and wellness exams, sports physicals, substance use disorder (SUD) behavioral therapy, acute musculoskeletal issues, influenza vaccinations, patient education, and other medical resources.

The year-round Mobile Health Clinic operates Monday through Thursday between 8:30 a.m. and 4 p.m. at various locations throughout Southwest Michigan. New patients and walk-in appointments are welcome and will be registered onsite. Schedule and location details for the Mobile Health Clinic can be found online at cassfamilyclinic.org/mobile-clinic.

"We're excited to welcome Rachel to our Mobile Health Clinic team," Joe Gavan, CEO of Cass Family Clinic. "Rachel is a trusted LMSW who will bring mental health patient care to the forefront of our Mobile Health Clinic."

The Mobile Health Clinic's services are available to everyone in the community, not just current Cass Family Clinic patients. Residents may register as new patients ahead of time at cassfamilyclinic.org/mobile-clinic or by calling (269) 445-3874. Medicaid and most private insurance plans are accepted. For those without insurance, a sliding fee scale based on income and household size is available.

**CASSOPOLIS**

# Village council hosts final 2025 meeting

**By JUSTIN FLAGEL**
Leader Publications Contributor

CASSOPOLIS — The Cassopolis Village Council met for their final regular meeting of 2025 on Monday, Dec. 8.

President Pro-Tem Frank Williams Jr. and other trustees shared their compliments for the village holiday decorations and their gratitude for the volunteers who helped put them out, including high school students, village staff, and the public works department. It was also noted that Midwest Energy & Communications donated the use of a bucket truck for assistance decorating.

The council also received compliments for the downtown holiday celebration and discussed the possibility of hiring a local artist to paint the village hall windows with holiday themes.

The council approved an engineering proposal for the replacement of sections of the force main pipeline, addressing ongoing problems in the village. Cassopolis received a grant for $1 million toward the project, though the grant is based on a percentage of the total cost and may vary as bids come in. The current total projected cost of $8.1 million will be split between the Village of Cassopolis and

See **CASSOPOLIS**, page A6

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Tracy Woods
Wayne Maxwell
Leon "Andy" Anderson
Dee Ann Mattes

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# FRANKLY

## Tips and quips

*What is Frankly? It is where readers sound off on issues of the day. Have a tip or a quip? Call Frankly at 269-687-7700 or email rich.cains@leaderpub.com.*

■ How can President Trump lower prices in one year when it took President Biden four years to jack them up?

■ Maybe Congress members should be forced to take Affordable Care insurance. Then, maybe we would all get a decent universal health plan.

■ Healthcare is a three-ring circus between insurance companies, providers and pharmaceuticals. So much money is in the system and yet, it is still not enough.

■ Give your postal carrier a break. They don't have six-foot-long arms. Clean the snow in front of your mailbox. Be respectful.

■ Great job Buchanan Township firefighters on the food drive. Thank you!

■ Mayor Nick Shelton has found his next gig and is taking awesome photos!

■ Reese Pence obviously needed mental health help. This whole thing breaks my heart.

■ Prayers for all the families that are grieving.

■ I think the CFP has made things worse in college football. Rather than expansion, maybe there should only be eight or four teams in the tournament. Quit giving away bids to the weak conferences.

■ Make no mistake about it. A tariff is a tax. And, that added tax is being paid by American consumers and American businesses. It is not being paid by other countries, regardless of what the White House Press Secretary says.

## WEATHER

**Saturday:** Mostly cloudy, with a high near 40. South wind 10 to 15 mph, with gusts as high as 30 mph.

**Saturday Night:** Partly cloudy, with a low around 20. West wind 10 to 15 mph, with gusts as high as 25 mph.

**Sunday:** Mostly sunny, with a high near 27. Northwest wind 10 to 15 mph, with gusts as high as 25 mph.

**Sunday Night:** Partly cloudy, with a low around 18.

**Monday:** A 20 percent chance of rain after 1 p.m. Mostly cloudy, with a high near 38.

**Monday Night:** A 30 percent chance of rain, mainly before 1 a.m. Mostly cloudy, with a low around 31.

**Tuesday:** Mostly cloudy, with a high near 44.

**Tuesday Night:** Mostly cloudy, with a low around 29.

**Wednesday:** A 30 percent chance of rain. Partly sunny, with a high near 49.

**Wednesday Night:** A 50 percent chance of rain. Mostly cloudy, with a low around 39.

**Christmas Day:** A slight chance of rain. Partly sunny, with a high near 55.

# Michigan Works secures $2.24 million in grants

**By PMG STAFF**

BENTON HARBOR — Michigan Works of Berrien, Cass and Van Buren Counties recently secured $2.24 million in competitive grants from the State of Michigan's Going PRO Talent Fund.

The dollars will go to 45 local employers to enhance their workforce through training, developing and retaining employees.

"The Going PRO Talent Fund is still one of the most in-demand resources for Michigan Employers," Michigan Works Business Solutions Manager Michael Mompremier said in a news release. "Investing in training builds stronger talent, reinforces the backbone of our workforce and supports the long-term health of our economy. We're thrilled to help employers skill up more than 1,280 new employees, existing team members and apprentices – without the added financial strain."

The training programs eligible for funding prepares individuals with the skills required to meet employers' needs and helps diversify the skill sets of current employees.

According to the release, employers can also receive onsite job training reimbursement for wages paid while training a new or existing employee on a new process, technology or machine.

Employers will work with training providers like the Michigan Manufacturing Technology center, Lake Michigan College and Southwestern Michigan College to deliver the training resulting from the grants.

This $2.24 million is part of the total $4.99 million in competitive grants Michigan Works secured from the state's Going PRO Talent Fund. In total, 81 local employers, seven industries and 2,710 employees were supported.

The next cycle of the Going PRO Talent Fund grant applications is slated to be released by the state in the spring.

For more information, visit Michigan.gov or MiWorks.org/Training-Funds.

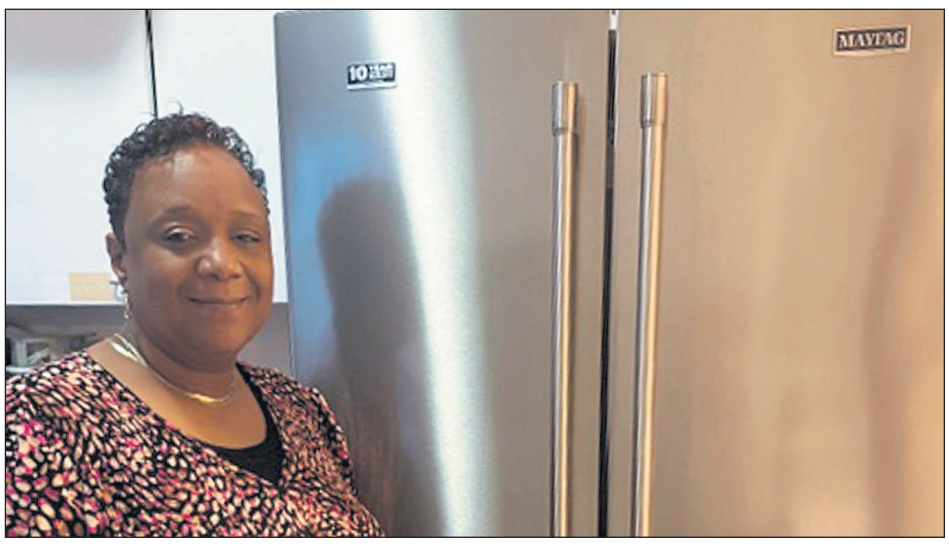


Photo provided

**Emergency Shelter Services Executive Director Reshella Hawkins stands with one of the United Way donated appliances in the shelter's kitchen.**

# United Way, Whirlpool donate appliances to Emergency Shelter Services

**SUBMITTED**

ST. JOSEPH — United Way of Southwest Michigan recently donated over $3,000 of new Whirlpool Corporation appliances to Emergency Shelter Services in Benton Harbor.

These appliances were from the recent online-only Whirlpool Appliance Sale that took place Dec. 3-14 at whirlpoolappliancesale.com.

"Emergency Shelter Services Executive Director, Reshella Hawkins and Board Member, Amanda Rush extend their deepest gratitude to the United Way and Whirlpool Corporation for their generous donation of over $3,000 worth of new appliances, including a refrigerator, slide-in range, and a dishwasher, for our Benton Harbor Emergency Shelter Kitchen," said ESS in a statement. "This donation is truly life-changing. Our kitchen is the 'heart of the home' for countless families recovering from circumstances that left them without permanent housing. It is where our clients gather daily, not only to meet their nutritional needs but also to connect with staff, case workers, and each other, fostering a sense of support and community.

"After years of heavy use, our old appliances needed replacement," the statement continued. "This timely support from United Way and Whirlpool ensures we can continue to meet the essential nutritional and emotional needs of our at-risk neighbors for many years. Thank you for strengthening the heart of our shelter home."

"Our organization couldn't be happier to provide access to this donation for such an extraordinary and important cause," said United Way of Southwest Michigan Senior Director of Organizational Sustainability Zack East. "ESS is a very valued impact partner with United Way. We simply approached our Whirlpool friends about the potential for this donation utilizing some of our unsold inventory from the sale. I think it's safe to say knowing it will be put to immediate good use is quite heartwarming."

The online edition of the Whirlpool Appliance Sale recently raised over $15,000 benefitting United Way from nearly 100 orders and was fulfilled with help from Feeding America, who donated the warehouse space and pickup help. Whirlpool Corporation donates appliances annually to United Way of Southwest Michigan to place on sale to the public at a discounted rate with all proceeds going toward United Way. In 2025, over $150,000 in net sale proceeds was raised from in-person and online appliance sales, which was invested in the community through United Way of Southwest Michigan's work across Berrien, Cass, and Van Buren Counties.

"At Whirlpool Corporation, we deeply value our relationship with United Way because of the essential work they do in communities like ours," said Rob Moser, Whirlpool Corporation vice president of Global Consumer Design and executive sponsor of United Way employee giving programs. "Connecting us with this critical need at Emergency Shelter Services is a perfect example of how United Way supports important services for community members."

The next Whirlpool Appliance Sale will be in person and is scheduled for May 2-3, 2026, at a location to be determined by United Way partner Clark Logic, who has hosted the warehouse space for the sale the past two years in St. Joseph. To receive alerts about the upcoming sale in May, sign up at WhirlpoolApplianceSale.com. Additional information about United Way of Southwest Michigan's work in the community is available at uwsm.org.

Find out about the work of Emergency Shelter Services at essberrien.org.

# Pokagon Band, State of Michigan sign cannabis contract

**SUBMITTED**

DOWAGIAC — The Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians of Michigan and Indiana and Michigan's Cannabis Regulatory Agency (CRA) announced that they have signed the state's second tribal-state cannabis compact, granting the Pokagon Band access to Michigan's licensed adult-use cannabis market.

The Pokagon Band legalized adult-use of cannabis on its tribal land in April 2023 and launched its Rolling Embers retail store and consumption lounge. Until now, Rolling Embers did not have access to Michigan's licensed adult-use cannabis market, including the ability to transact business with state licensees. The cannabis compact will allow Rolling Embers to access the same wholesale and distribution channels as state-licensed dispensaries and to participate in Michigan's statewide seed-to-sale marijuana tracking system (Metrc).

"The Pokagon Band and the State of Michigan have enjoyed a long-standing relationship built on mutual cooperation and respect for each other's sovereignty that benefits both Michiganders and our Tribal Citizens," said Matthew Wesaw, Tribal Council Chairman for the Pokagon Band. "We are pleased to have agreed on a framework that respects tribal jurisdiction, while accounting for legitimate state interests, to further advance our common goal of expanding commerce in Michigan's cannabis industry."

"We are pleased to finalize this compact with the Pokagon Band, which reflects our shared commitment to a safe, equitable, and well-regulated cannabis marketplace in Michigan," said CRA Executive Director Brian Hanna. "This agreement provides regulatory clarity, supports responsible commerce, and advances our mutual goal of protecting public health and safety."

With this cannabis compact, the Pokagon Band will now be able to:

■ Purchase cannabis from and sell cannabis to state licensees

■ Transport cannabis outside of its Indian lands for transactions with state licensees

■ Integrate into Metrc to track cannabis for transactions with state licensees

■ Collaborate with the CRA on inspections and enforcement

The cannabis compact requires the Pokagon Band to share a percentage of its Cannabis Excise Tax with the state to reimburse the state for its costs of administering the cannabis compact. The Pokagon Band will allocate remaining Cannabis Excise Tax revenues to fund essential government programs and projects throughout the region.

Many of the 12 federally recognized tribes in Michigan have expressed interest in pursuing similar compacts, and both state officials and tribal representatives agree that clear, legally binding agreements like this one are necessary to avoid jurisdictional confusion, foster consumer trust, and advance the shared goal of protecting public health and safety.

**DOWAGIAC**

# Man arrested in drug, weapons bust

**By MAXWELL HARDEN**
max.harden@leaderpub.com

DOWAGIAC — A 58-year-old man was arrested Wednesday in Dowagiac on drug and weapon-related charges, according to the Cass County Drug Enforcement Team.

At approximately 3:30 p.m. Wednesday, the Cass County Drug Enforcement Team and the Dowagiac Police Department, along with the Cass County Sheriff's Office, executed a search warrant in the 200 block of Halstead Street, in Dowagiac. While searching the residence, detectives located multiple guns and multiple syringes full of Black Tar Heroin and other drug paraphernalia.

Detectives arrested a 58-year-old male for Felon in Possession of Firearms, Felon in Possession of Ammunition, Felonious Assault with a Deadly Weapon and Possession of Heroin. The suspects name is being withheld pending arraignment on the charges in the 4th District Court. The investigation is still ongoing.

Anyone with information regarding this case or any other criminal activity is asked to call the Cass County Sheriff's Office Tip Line at 1 (800) 426-9328 or contact the Sheriff's Office through the Anonymous Web Tip Line at www.ccso.info.

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# Stores, financial institutions come up short as penny production stops

By MYESHA JOHNSON
The Detroit News (TNS)

DETROIT — Marie Shoulders of Detroit has a penny purse, a penny jar and a small penny pouch.

As a self-confessed penny hoarder, she wasn't surprised to hear about the scarcity of the reddish-brown copper-and-zinc coins.

"The pennies are short because people have them at home in they drawers, purses and everywhere. I keep them. ... There's not a shortage, they're out there, we have them," Shoulders, 66, said. "We are penny hoarders."

Shoulders used a coin kiosk machine for the first time Wednesday afternoon at Diversified Members Credit Union in downtown Detroit, donating 35 cents from her stash to the financial institution, which posted a sign in its lobby saying that "pennies may be limited and/or unavailable upon request."

The Detroit credit union is not the only establishment worried about running short of the coins emblazoned with Abraham Lincoln's profile.

National and local retailers have been asking customers for exact change or to check out digitally during transactions as a federal decision to cease penny production has reduced circulation of the 1-cent coin even further.

President Donald Trump ordered the U.S. Mint in February to stop making pennies, saying it cost more to produce them – nearly 4 cents – than they were worth. The mint in Philadelphia struck the last pennies Nov. 12, ending production that began in 1793. The government is expected to save $56 million per year as a result of the decision, according to the mint.

Last year, the U.S. Mint struck about 3.2 billion pennies, which typically have a 30-year life span.

Banks and businesses will continue to take the coins during transactions but distribution back to consumers has been especially challenging since production stopped. For every 10 pennies produced, only three recirculate, while the others end up in coin jars or other random places, according to Jeff Lenard, spokesperson for NACS, an association of convenience and fuel retailers.

The Retail Industry Leaders Association said in a release that Federal Reserve locations began reporting depleted supplies as early as the summer. By mid-November, more than 100 of the 165 coin distribution sites across the country were penny-less.

### Retailers struggle to adjust

Lenard said convenience stores have three "bad options" to deal with insufficient penny supplies: rounding down in the customer's favor, which would cost an estimated $1.25 million daily; round up or down to the nearest nickel, which based on various state and federal regulations, could subject Michigan retailers to possible fines or lawsuits; or lastly, encourage customers to pay with credit cards, which incurs swipe fees.

Hussein Nassar, who owns a Marathon gas station in Allen Park, said about a third of his customers use cash and are confused by rounding up or down to the nearest nickel.

"Let's say the total is $1.92, I'll put it at $1.90. It depends. If it's $1.94, I round it to $1.95," Nassar said. "Many people do complain and most of them, they don't really know what the issue is."

The issue: Nassar hasn't been able to get pennies from the bank for multiple weeks.

"If you go to the bank, they tell you they don't have it and they have to put in an order for you ... (or) it's not at all available. I was able to get a few, like a half box, but now, lately, they've been saying they're out."

Last week, the state issued a notice regarding the phase-out of pennies in reference to Michigan's 6 percent sales tax. It said retailers may round the amount due from customers up or down, based on their own discretion, to the nearest nickel. The General Sales Tax Act and Use Tax Act requires rounding based off the third decimal place of the sales tax and that retailers round up to whole cents when the third decimal place is greater than four or round down to a whole cent when the third decimal place is four or less.

Convenience stores started noticing issues in June as penny production was being phased out, Lenard said.

"Pennies are the coin that needs to be circulated more than any other coin," he said. "It is the least loved. Whether it's in ashtrays or cars, they tend to pile up and not get used."

Lenard noted that the association wrote to Congress in October, asking federal lawmakers to pass legislation allowing businesses to round transactions to the nearest nickel. He added that customers are taking to social media expressing discontent with retailers rounding up in some stores and down in others.

"Anytime somebody doesn't feel good about coming to your store, you could possibly lose them for good," Leland said. "And it's something simple, you're trying to do the right thing with this penny shortage and you lose a customer because of a misunderstanding.

"We just need resolution. This transition has been successfully done in other countries like Canada and Australia, but when it was done in those countries, it was a process in place. ... We need Congress to act and say 'These are the things that we can do,' so that retailers have a path forward," Lenard said.

### 'Not a crisis, just a transition'

Coin collector Mike Dallas of Grand Rapids teaches 40 students in Grand Rapids Public Schools how to analyze pennies as a use of copper and their importance in history. He also uses them for business classes, starting a student off with a roll of pennies and challenging them to grow that 50 cents into dollar bills.

"My favorites are pennies from the '50s or '60s because of the way it feels and looks," Dallas, 44, said.

"I'd order a box of pennies but now I can't order those boxes anymore, so when I go in, I'd tell them I want $10, or 20 rolls, and pretty much they'll give me what they can or tell me that I can't have any pennies," he said. "I've been cut off."

Banks like Fifth Third and Huntington have told Dallas to look elsewhere for pennies this month as they prioritize businesses. And Mark Evenson, CFO at Diversified Members Credit Union, said the institution would be following similar protocols.

Evenson, who has been in the industry since 1996, said although the credit union currently has a stockpile of pennies, it will prioritize small businesses that need coins for their operations.

"We've been through coin shortages before," he said. "It's not the first time. It's just the first time that they're going to be going away forever, so it's going to be educating our members, the retailers educating their customers and there'll be some short-term pains, lack of understanding. However, we'll get through it. It is not a crisis, just a transition."

## OBITUARIES

### Tracy Woods

December 8, 1967 – December 8, 2025

Tracy Annette (Fowlkes) Woods, 58, of Vandalia, entered eternal rest on December 8, 2025, surrounded by the love and presence of her family in St. Joseph, Michigan.

Born on December 8, 1967, in Niles, Michigan, she was the youngest daughter of Sam and Betty Fowlkes. On August 5, 2015, she married Solomon Woods in Cassopolis, Michigan. Tracy lived a life grounded in faith and unconditional love. She was a mother first and foremost, but she was also so much more to those blessed to know her – a cherished daughter, sister, wife, aunt, cousin, confidant, and friend. Tracy had a gift for making others feel seen, loved, and encouraged. Her spirit and smile lifted those around her, and people were drawn to the light she brought into every space she entered. Her faith guided her through every season of life, even when times were hard. Tracy cared deeply for the people in her life and held those close to her in the highest regard. She touched countless hearts simply by being who she was – kind, fun, compassionate, honest, and full of grace. With quiet strength, she offered guidance, a listening ear, and the very best advice. Her life radiated warmth and understanding, offering strength, comfort, and encouragement to everyone around her.

Tracy loved creating beauty in the world. She found joy in gardening, fishing, singing, painting, and had an intuitive talent for interior design. Her home reflected her spirit – vibrant, inviting, and thoughtfully arranged – showing the love and care she put into every detail.

Family was everything to Tracy. She treasured time spent together, especially during gatherings filled with laughter and music. Nothing brought her more joy than time spent with her children and grandchildren. They were her pride, her joy, and her greatest blessing.

Tracy is survived by her loving husband, Solomon Woods; her children, Julius Young, Walter Lee IV, Aeja Lee, and Aaron Lee; and her father, Sam Fowlkes III. She is also lovingly remembered by her brother, Sam "Sammy" (Felicia) Fowlkes IV; her four grandchildren, Rayyen, Zaira, Vince, and Saeeda; and a host of aunts, uncles, nieces, nephews, cousins, and friends who will forever cherish her memory.

She was preceded in death by her oldest son, John Young III; her mother, Betty Fowlkes; her grandparents, Leona, Joseph, Sam, and Bessie; her aunt, Barbara; and her nephew, Jeremiah. We find comfort in knowing she is now reunited with her oldest son and her mother, wrapped in God's eternal embrace. Tracy's legacy of love, faith, and strength will continue to live on in all who knew her.

Family and Friends will gather Friday, December 19, 2025 at 10:00 a.m. in Wagner Family Funerals 202 North Broadway, Cassopolis. Her Service will follow at 11:00 a.m. with burial at Calvin Township Cemetery.

Arrangements have been entrusted to Wagner Family Funerals Connelly Chapel, Cassopolis. Please share a memory or a message online: wagnercares.com.

### Dee Ann Mattes

NILES — Dee Ann Mattes (nee' Hurt), of Niles, Michigan began this experience called life on 07 September 1932 in Winslow, Indiana to Ermil Burns and John A Hurt. She was a wife, mother, grandmother, sister, aunt, daughter, sister-in-law, and friend.

Dee Ann ascended into the Realm of the Angels on 03 December 2025 after 93 years of living a good life. She was with her loyal caregivers Ricky and Dianna who loved her very much when she crossed over. Dee Ann was welcomed back "home" by her loving husband of fifty-two years, Charles Millhouse Mattes, who she married in Highland Park Michigan on 08 September 1959 and who passed 23 February 2012. She was welcomed back by all those brilliant souls that loved and cherished her when they were alive. Though, her family will mourn the loss of their matriarch, they rejoice at the life Grandee, as her granddaughters called her, had lived.

She is survived by her daughters, Leslie (Laurent) Boucher of Mattapoisett Massachusetts, Michelle (Robert) O'Neil of West Yarmouth Massachusetts; son Mark Millhouse Mattes of New Albany, Ohio; granddaughters Charlee (Mete Sanli) O'Neil, Haley O'Neil, Maia Mattes; her sister Leah Fisher; her sister-in-law Suzanne Coash; and many cousins, nieces, and nephews.

She graduated from Indiana University in Bloomington with a BA in Business in 1954 when very few women attended business school. After graduation, she headed up Purdue Memorial Union to enrich student experience at Purdue University. She was an Interior Designer throughout her life, but also a Social Worker in South Bend early on. As a Social Worker she helped many deserving people in many dangerous situations. After marriage, she spent her time as a housewife but also went into charity work.

In her 93 years, she headed many Charitable Organization in the area. Some organizations were Camp Millhouse for special needs individuals, Children's Dispensary, Co-founded the Women's Art League in South Bend, she was a Board Member of the Snite Museum a Notre Dame for decades, The South Bend Symphony, several Show house Charity fundraiser, The Niles Garden Club, Ladies Historical, The DAR, Kappa Kappa Kappa, and many more throughout the years. She was a server to the Arts and Humanity. She won some awards for her charitable work.

Many people didn't know that she practiced meditation for over fifty years. She exuded God's Loves in her daily examples. She was a Server and spread love to everyone she met. She never raised her voice and always was a calm influence on those around her. It was said of her that when we get to wherever we are striving to go spiritually, she will already be there waiting.

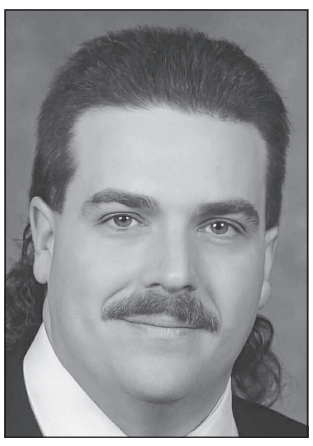
Come join us in celebrating this Grand Lady, from 11:30 am until time of Memorial Service at 12:00 noon Friday, December 19, 2025 in the First Presbyterian Church, 13 South Fourth Street, Niles, Michigan.

In lieu of flowers, a donation to Camp Millhouse, 25600 Kelly Road, South Bend, Indiana 46614 would be much appreciated.

Arrangements have been entrusted to Halbritter Wickens Funeral Services, Niles. Please share a memory or a message online: halbritterwickens.com

To plant trees in memory, please visit the Sympathy Store.

### Wayne Maxwell



Wayne H. Maxwell, 67, of Niles, died peacefully Friday, December 12, 2025 in the comfort of his family's presence.

His life began April 10, 1958 in South Bend, Indiana the youngest of two children born to Harold and Joan Maxwell. He married Kelly R. Liggett April 12, 1980 in First Presbyterian Church of Niles.

Wayne was a proud member of the Niles High School Class of '76 where he graduated with honors. He was a sheet metal genius: if he could draw it, he could make it. His specialty was the Goldberg Chase. He was an outstanding Fastpitch softball third baseman and pitcher. Wayne started in the Niles League and then went to the Midwest Travel League. Then he moved up to the majors where he played for Plangger's Furniture and then Trans Aire. He was a top third baseman in the country from the mid '80s to the early '90s. They won the Major National Championship in 1988, where he had two hits, stole second, and scored on a single to left field. He won a US Olympic Festival Gold Medal in 1989. Wayne won eleven state championships and was named MVP several times throughout his career. He used to say, "He was glad his first love liked his second love, as much as he did."

Wayne loved the University of Michigan and was an avid fan of the Detroit Lions and Tigers.

Wayne will be greatly missed by family and friends. He is survived by his beloved wife of forty-five years, Kelly Maxwell of Niles; his mother, Joan Maxwell of Niles; sister, Julie (Jim) Morris of Niles; special cousins, Dianne (Paul) Zielbauer of Buchanan, Tammy (Mike) Zeigert of Niles; nieces, Jennifer Morris, Kateasha Crespo, Cali Katzenberger; nephews, Dillon Wayne Crespo, Wyatt Katzenberger; father-in-law, Marty Liggett; sister-in-law, Marci Katzenberger; brother-in-law, David Crespo, Sr.; his precious dogs, Belle, Dragon, and a host of cousins, teammates, and friends.

He was preceded in death by his father; mother-in-law, Diane Liggett; sister-in-law, Tracy Crespo; nephew, David Crespo, Jr.; cousins, Bob Fischer, and Layne Rose.

Family and friends will gather from 4:00 p.m. until 7:00 p.m. Wednesday, December 17, 2025 in Halbritter Wickens Funeral Services, 615 East Main Street, Niles. A funeral service will be held at 1:00 p.m. Thursday, December 18, 2025 in the funeral home.

Wayne will be laid to rest in Union Cemetery, Berrien Center.

The family prefers contributions in memory of Wayne be made to D1 Fastpitch Team, care of Halbritter Wickens Funeral Services, 615 East Main Street, Niles, Michigan 49120.

Arrangements have been entrusted to Halbritter Wickens Funeral Services, Niles. Please share a memory or a message online: halbritterwickens.com.

To plant trees in memory, please visit the Sympathy Store.

### Leon 'Andy' Anderson Jr.

August 31, 1944 – November 30, 2025

Leon (Andy) Compton Anderson, Jr. died November 30, 2025, at Harbor Hospice in Portland, TX at the age of 81.

He was born on August 31, 1944, in Dowagiac, Michigan to LeonCompton, Sr. and Doris (Frantz) Anderson. Andy is a 1969 graduate of the College of the Ozarks with a bachelor's degree in history.

On April 11, 1970, he married his beloved wife Jane Ann Telaar (1948-2018). Together, they moved back to Dowagiac, Michigan, where they raised their 3 sons and both became important members of their community. Along with his wife Jane, they enjoyed learning and preserving the history of their town and historic home. In 2019, Andy officially got his wife's house, the Criffield Whiteley house in Dowagiac, recognized as a Michigan Historic Site and placed on the National Register of Historic Places.

He was cared for and deeply loved by his family and friends. Surviving are his three sons, Tim (Casey) of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, Jae (Mary), of Richmond, Virginia; and Dale (Stephanie), of Corpus Christi, Texas; four grandchildren, Julia Robinson, Andrew (Andy) Anderson, Victoria (Torie) Anderson, and Rael Anderson; and three great-grandchildren Theren, Atticus and Guinevere. Preceding him in death were his parents and his wife, Jane.

Honoring Andy's wishes, there will be no public service. His family will be celebrating his life privately and interment will be in Riverside Cemetery, Dowagiac, MI, where he will be interred alongside his wife, Jane.

In lieu of flowers, please consider making a donation to the Dowagiac Area History Museum. Arrangements have been entrusted to Clark Chapel-Starks Family Funeral Homes, Dowagiac, MI.

To share a memory or offer condolences, please visit Andy's personalized webpage at www.clarkch.com.

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# Rising electric bills lead to state scrutiny

**By KEVIN HARDY**
Stateline.org (TNS)

Aristide Economopoulos / Tribune News Service

**Rising utility prices are increasingly drawing scrutiny from state regulators and lawmakers nationwide.**

The last time the Maine Public Utilities Commission considered an electricity price hike, the proposal received fewer than 90 comments from the public.

Three years later, amid skyrocketing energy prices, more than 800 people weighed in on the plan, showing up to public hearings and even protesting outside.

The commission last month ultimately rejected the proposal that would have raised bills by about $35 per month for customers of Central Maine Power, the state's largest electricity provider. In explaining the denial, Commission Chair Philip Bartlett cited growing energy costs.

"There's no question that affordability is increasingly an issue, not just with respect to electricity prices, but across the entire economy," Bartlett told Stateline. "And people are feeling enormous pressure."

Rising utility prices are increasingly drawing scrutiny from state regulators and lawmakers nationwide. Given the public outcry, many state leaders are considering rate freezes, additional energy assistance funds or new rates targeting large energy users such as data centers. But states only have so much control; regulators say they can't change the fundamental market dynamics that will likely continue to push prices up.

Between January and September of this year, average home electricity rates increased 11.7 percent – more than triple the rate of inflation, according to the National Energy Assistance Directors Association, which represents state employees administering federal energy assistance programs. Average electric bills increased nearly 30 percent between 2021 and 2025, climbing from $121 to $156 per month.

Many low-income households have long struggled to cover utility bills. Now, advocates say, high prices are affecting a growing swath of the middle class.

Utility prices played a major role in recent Democratic gubernatorial wins in New Jersey and Virginia. And in Georgia, Democrats flipped two seats on the board that regulates public utilities – the first time Democrats won statewide constitutional office in nearly two decades.

Most consumers get their electricity from utilities that must seek state consent for rate changes, with appointed or elected state boards approving price structures.

In Washington state, Ann Rendahl, one of three members of the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission, said state utility regulators always consider affordability when making rate decisions. Now those deliberations have attracted much more public and political scrutiny.

"We're hearing from more and more people," she said. "I think it's becoming more of a concern politically as well as legislatures and governors hear about this."

Prices have been affected by a multitude of factors: Russia's war in Ukraine, which has disrupted global oil and gas supplies; extreme weather events; and rising demand driven by the artificial intelligence boom and energy-intensive data centers have all played a role.

Major utility providers say they are focused on keeping electricity affordable and reliable. They point to massive upgrades to the grid as a primary driver of rising prices.

While state attention on the issue is growing, experts see no immediate relief in sight for consumers.

In Maine, a separate rate increase request will likely come before regulators soon. And the Maine Public Utilities Commission recently approved a supply price increase estimated to raise customer bills by $13 to $17 a month.

In Florida, regulators just approved a $6.9 billion rate increase for the state's largest utility, which opponents said was the largest hike in state history. The typical bill will rise by $2.50 per month to $136.64 next year. But because of other recent rate increases, the average customer will pay hundreds of dollars more each year than they did in 2021, when the typical monthly bill was $101.70, The Associated Press reported.

Amid rising demand, the consultant firm ICF predicts U.S. residential customers could see electricity rates increase 15 percent to 40 percent by 2030, with some rates doubling by 2050.

"Like everything else, I think [utility] costs are not going down," said Rendahl, who is also president of the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners, which represents state public service commissioners.

## 'We can't take it anymore'

While running her successful campaign for governor of New Jersey, Democrat Mikie Sherrill, then a U.S. House member, pledged she would declare a state of emergency on her first day to freeze utility rates.

"My priority is relief to New Jersey consumers, and I will bring everyone to the table to deliver it," she said in September. Sherrill takes office in January, but many experts question how much she can do to lower prices.

Regulators there had already issued $100 utility bill credits to provide relief for all customers, the New Jersey Monitor reported.

"This should be helpful for people, but in no way solves the problem," Zenon Christodoulou, a member of the New Jersey Board of Public Utilities, said in August.

President Donald Trump has dismissed broader affordability concerns as "a con job" by Democrats. But Republican state officials have underscored the growing strain of electric bills.

Months before Democrats in Georgia attracted national attention for winning election to the utility board, GOP lawmakers there were raising concerns about the growing data center industry and had proposed legislation to protect ratepayers.

In September, Indiana Republican Gov. Mike Braun directed his newly appointed consumer advocate to dive into rising electricity bills, specifically targeting utility profits. The governor said utility investors, not ratepayers, should bear more of the pain of rising prices.

"We can't take it anymore," Braun said in a news release.

## Infrastructure updates increase costs

In justifying rising prices, utility companies have pointed to a wave of massive investments in the electric grid. Utilities are on track to spend $208 billion this year, according to the Edison Electric Institute, which represents the nation's investor-owned electric utilities.

Members of that group, which provide power to 250 million Americans, are projected to make capital expenditures of more than $1.1 trillion between 2025 and 2029.

Drew Maloney, president and CEO of the institute, told Stateline in a statement that the nation's electric companies are focused on keeping electricity as "reliable and as affordable as possible" by "making essential investments to lower costs and protect America's most important machine – the U.S. electric grid."

But utility companies have "perverse incentives" to drive up capital expenses, said David Pomerantz, executive director of the nonprofit Energy and Policy Institute, a watchdog group tracking fossil fuel and utility industries.

Utilities are ensured a certain return on their capital investments, which he said can push them to spend heavily on projects that provide questionable benefits. State commissions set a rate of return for energy projects aimed at ensuring utilities can attract investors. That gives states an enormous amount of influence over prices, Pomerantz said.

"At the risk of sounding a little flip about this, it's actually a lot easier for utilities than it is for, say, grocery prices," he said. "What they're allowed to charge customers is usually set by a group of three or five people."

While politicians increasingly acknowledge the strain of rising utility costs, Pomerantz said it's unclear whether state leaders will actually lower utility profits to provide relief for customers.

"Democrats and Republicans suddenly realize they have a crisis on their hands, and so the rhetoric has changed a lot in just the last few months," he said. "It's good rhetoric, but is anything different going to happen?"

## More households struggle with bills

As bills have increased, many residents have fallen behind.

An analysis of consumer credit data from the left-leaning groups Century Foundation and Protect Borrowers found about 1 in 20 households – some 14 million Americans – had utility bills at least 90 days past due in June.

Between March 2022 and June 2025, the report found average overdue balances climbed from $597 to $789.

"It's a real source of financial anxiety for working people who are trying to figure out how to stay warm in Wisconsin or not die from heat stroke in Arizona," said Mike Pierce, executive director of Protect Borrowers, an organization originally founded to advocate for student loan borrowers.

Pierce said the growing utility debt speaks to wider financial concerns across the country, as overall household debt balloons.

"Our theory of the case here is that Americans are struggling, which is the same thing Americans will tell you when you talk to them," he said.

The federal Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program, commonly known as LIHEAP, has faced multiple threats from the Trump administration, which sought to eliminate its funding, fired top agency staff and withheld pledged funds. But amid rising political pressure, the federal government did release those funds last month.

While that's good news for many households, the buying power of the program has significantly decreased because of rising energy prices, said Mark Wolfe, an energy economist and executive director of the National Energy Assistance Directors Association, which represents state LIHEAP directors.

Many liberal-led states have their own supplementary energy assistance programs, Wolfe noted. Lawmakers in some states have sought to boost those programs. Oregon, for instance, this year doubled its assistance fund from $20 million to $40 million.

"It happened pretty quickly," Wolfe said of the rising prices. "So it's not just poor families who are struggling to pay their electric bill."

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- Never allow snow to cover your natural gas meter or its pressure regulator or block your appliance exhaust vents.
- Please use caution when shoveling snow, plowing or snow blowing to avoid piling snow against the natural gas meter, regulator or appliance vents.
- Clear a path to the meter free from snow and ice for easy access.
- Remove soft snow build-up gently, using only a broom or your hand rather than a shovel that could damage the meter.
- Do not try to remove ice or frozen snow from the natural gas meter pressure regulator or piping. If you find your meter or pressure regulator covered in ice or frozen snow, do not attempt to remove the ice or use de-icer.
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# OPINION

**WRITE US**
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Editorial Page, Leader Publications, 25 N. 2nd St., Niles MI 49120

All letters should include a daytime telephone number and street address for verification. Letters must be 500 words or fewer. Leader Publications reserves the right to edit letters for length, style, grammar, inappropriate content and libel.

## From kitchen tables to a community promise

**By CHRISTINE VANLANDINGHAM**

Every person deserves dignity, independence and choice – especially as we age or live with a disability. These aren't luxuries; they're the foundation of a life well-lived. Yet, for too many older adults, those principles can feel fragile – eroded by isolation, health challenges or systems that don't always bend toward the individual.

At your Area Agency on Aging, we are privileged to be welcomed into people's homes. We sit in their living rooms and at their kitchen tables, and we listen. We hear how they want to live their lives, what their goals are and what barriers stand in the way. Then, we create a plan to meet their goals. Not our goals, not the system's goals – theirs.

When a local family shared a story with me this week, those principles came into sharp focus. Their father, in his late 80s, had lived with multiple chronic conditions. His aim was clear and simple: to live independently in his own home for as long as possible. And he did – right up to his last morning – thanks to his own determination, aging services and the steadfast support of highly-engaged family caregivers.

When a sudden critical health episode occurred, the family called for help. An ambulance ride to Corewell Health South Hospital provided exceptional care and compassion. Once it was clear that death was imminent, he was transferred to Hanson Hospice Center, where the transition from life to end-of-life was incredibly peaceful. He was surrounded by beauty, kindness and a team that honored both him and his family with gentle, attentive care. It was, in the family's words, "a good end to a good life" – exactly the kind of dignified, person-directed experience he wanted.

For me, this story is more than a touching moment – it's a blueprint. It's what happens when dignity, independence and choice guide every interaction, from the first phone call for information to years of partnership supporting daily living, health and connection. It's what happens when families have the information, resources, support and confidence to navigate complex decisions. And it's what happens when community partners – health care, hospice, social care – work shoulder-to-shoulder to honor people's goals.

That's the work your Area Agency on Aging advances every day. We listen to individuals as they define their own goals, then work alongside them to find solutions to the obstacles they face. Partnering with more than 70 community-based organizations, we coordinate services that help people remain at home. We coach and support caregivers and strengthen local partnerships, ensuring that dignity, choice and independence are more than ideals, but a daily reality for older adults in our community.

We know there's no one-size-fits-all solution – what makes life better for one person may not work for another. That's why we take the unique insights gathered around kitchen tables, along with the experiences of the thousands of individuals we serve each year, and use them to inform the way we shape programs, services and public policy.

I was recently in Washington, D.C., with colleagues from across the country to carry that local promise into national action. Our advocacy is rooted in the Older Americans Act – a law that, for more than 50 years, has shaped everyday supports that sustain dignity, independence and choice: home-delivered meals, caregiver support, transportation, information and assistance and programs that combat isolation. The act is more than legislation; it's scaffolding that helps communities keep their promises to older adults and people with disabilities.

But the heart of our work isn't in conference rooms or the halls of Congress – it's in kitchens and living rooms, phone calls from older adults and family caregivers, careful plans made after a diagnosis, in the everyday moments that make up a life. The stories we hear remind us what "success" looks like: not perfection or infinity, but a life lived on one's own terms, supported by people and systems that respect those terms to the very end.

So, here's my invitation to the community: Learn about the resources available through your Area Agency on Aging. Share them with someone who might need support – for a short-term need or a long-term journey. And when you have the chance, speak up for policies that protect dignity and independence, because aging well is something we all have a stake in.

Let's also take a moment to celebrate the caregivers, volunteers and professionals who make these stories possible, and commit to being part of that promise. Whether through advocacy, service or simple kindness, we all play a role in ensuring that every person can live a life of dignity on their own terms.

Because dignity, independence and choice aren't just ideals – they're a promise we keep together, one conversation and one act of care at a time.

*Christine Vanlandingham is CEO of Region IV Area Agency on Aging in Southwest Michigan. Questions on age or independence services? Call the Info-Line for Aging & Disability at 800-654-2810 or visit areaagencyonaging.org.*

**BERRIEN COUNTY TRIAL COURT**

## Area residents sentenced to prison

**By DEBRA HAIGHT**
Leader Publications Contributor

NILES — Four area residents were sentenced to prison Monday on drug, domestic violence and criminal sexual conduct charges in Berrien County Trial Court sentencings at the Niles courthouse.

Michael Alexander Bentley, 25, of Buchanan, pleaded no contest to first-degree criminal sexual conduct and was sentenced to 12 years to 53 years in prison. He has credit for 214 days served, must pay $258 in fines and costs and must register as a sex offender.

BENTLEY

The incident occurred in January, 2020 at a location in Buchanan with an assault on an underage female.

The victim's mother spoke before sentencing and said that the incident had not only greatly affected her daughter but the rest of the family. "Words cannot express the impact this had on her," the woman said. "… She has withdrawn from friends and family and suffered from intense anxiety and has also affected her physical health."

Assistant Prosecutor Myrene Koch asked the judge to take the victim impact statements into consideration with his sentencing. "This is not something that will go away quickly, she will have to deal with this for the rest of her life," Koch said. "I ask for the maximum sentence."

Defense attorney Carri Briseno said the situation had been traumatic for both the victim's family and her client's family. She noted that Bentley had suffered abuse himself and also had psychiatric problems.

Judge Hosbein said that he didn't think the sentencing guidelines of 42 to 70 months were appropriate. He cited the psychological and physical damage the victim has suffered, the fear and anxiety the girl and her siblings have suffered and indications that Bentley was grooming her as substantial and compelling reasons for him to deviate from the guidelines.

CARTER

Richard Eugene Carter, 34, of Niles, pleaded guilty to two counts of second offense delivery/manufacture of methamphetamine and was sentenced to 12 to 40 years in prison and $266 in fines and costs. He has credit for no time served as he was on parole at the time of the incident.

The incident occurred Aug. 27 in Niles when he sold drugs to an undercover police officer. His sentencing guidelines were doubled since it was a second offense. This sentence will be consecutive to any sanction he receives for violating his parole. His parole started July 16, 2024

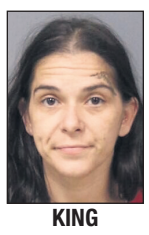
Defense attorney Jason Engram said that Carter understands the danger of his behavior in continuing to use drugs. "He understands the danger of doing what he did and the danger of drugs," he said. "He didn't physically threaten anybody. This situation was not horribly severe but it was severe."

"He does take care of his family and he knows this was an absolutely horrible idea to sell drugs," Engram added. "He knows there are better ways to make money."

"I know it was the wrong decision to make to go back to my old ways," Carter said.

"You've committed very similar types of offenses in the past," Berrien County Trial Court Judge Gordon Hosbein said. "Based on that history and your inability to learn and change your ways, I will sentence you to prison but give you a sentence at the bottom of the guidelines."

April Nichole King, 34, of Niles, pleaded guilty to possession of methamphetamine and was sentenced to 15 months to 10 years in prison. She was ordered to pay $198 in fines and costs. She has credit for no time served as she was on parole at the time of this offense.


KING

The incident occurred Oct. 16 in Niles. This sentence will be consecutive to any sanction she receives for violating her parole. Her parole had started April 15, 2025.

King apologized for her actions. "I want to apologize," she said. "I need to do better and I want to get my kids back in my life. I know I need to change my ways."

Judge Hosbein said he was concerned that King had just been released on parole when this incident happen. "I am going to stay within the guidelines but you will do time in prison," he said. "That is the most appropriate sanction. I have to protect the community when there is recidivism with the same crimes committed."

Gregory Allen Rhodes II, 32, of South Bend, pleaded guilty to second offense aggravated domestic violence and was sentenced to 14 months to five years in prison. He has credit for 124 days served and must pay $258 in fines and costs.

RHODES

The incident occurred Aug. 13 in Niles when he assaulted his mother.

Defense attorney Shayne Williams said Rhodes' mother has said that Rhodes has substance abuse issues and hope he gets treatment while he is incarcerated.

Rhodes apologized for his actions against his mother and said he was ashamed of what he did. "I regret everything that happened," he said. "I do have a substance abuse problem."

## Niles man gets additional prison time for obstructing police

**By DEBRA HAIGHT**
For Leader Publications

CASSOPOLIS — A Niles man already in prison received another prison term Friday, Dec. 12 in Cass Circuit Court sentencings.

Jody Armando Bonds, Jr., 21, of Broadway in Niles, pleaded guilty to resisting and obstructing police and was sentenced to 12 to 24 months in prison. He must pay $1,198 in fines and costs.

BONDS

The incident occurred June 26 in Cassopolis. He was a passenger in a stolen car being pursued by police from Elkhart County. He and others fled the car and he was located in a field with use of a drone.

Bonds has credit for no time served as he was on parole from a June 28, 2021 unarmed robbery prison sentence. He is also scheduled to be sentenced Dec. 16 in Berrien County on a misdemeanor larceny charge from a June 17 incident.

"At age 21, you are off to a pretty bad start in life," Cass County Prosecutor Victor Fitz said. "You've presented yourself as a danger to the public on repeated occasions. It won't turn out well for you if you continue down this road … The good thing you have going for you is your youth. You can have a pretty good life if you change your ways."

Cass County Circuit Court Judge Mark Herman agreed, telling Bonds that he's "only 21 and digging yourself quite a hole."

He noted that Bonds had dropped out of school and had not bothered to get his high school diploma. "You could probably get your GED done pretty easily if you were not driving around with others in a stolen car," he said.

"I seriously hope you don't throw your life away," he added. "You only have one chance at life. Do you want the rest of your life to be behind bars? You can change that, no one else can. When you apologize to me, I appreciate it, but look in the mirror and apologize to yourself. You are young enough to have a good life, but it's up to you."

A Niles woman whose desire to see her young child led to her former boyfriend being seriously injured in an assault received a probation term and the chance to get the charge reduced.

THAR

Emily Anne Thar, 32, of Niles, pleaded no contest to third degree home invasion and was sentenced to three years probation, credit for 55 days served, $3,128 in fines and costs and $806.14 in restitution. The charge will be reduced to illegal entry if she successfully completes her probation.

The incident occurred Feb. 22 at a residence in Milton Township. Thar and her current boyfriend, Greggery Williams, went to the home of her former boyfriend and the father of her child, Gregry Hammond. Thar entered the house where Hammond's mother locked herself and the child in a bedroom and called police.

Williams hit Hammond with a shovel in the incident with Hammond receiving serious injuries. Williams, 35, also of Niles, pleaded no contest to assault with intent do great bodily harm less than murder and was sentenced in October to 29 months to 10 years in prison.

Judge Herman told Thar that her actions that night as well as the fact that she doesn't have custody of any of her three children showed that she "isn't mother of the year."

"What kind of example do you think it is for your children to go to a home at midnight, do donuts in the yard and then see the father of your child assaulted?" he asked. "If that's the kind of mother you will be and the example you set, you're not going to have much contact with your children in the years to come."

"There is absolutely no excuse for this incident to happen but for your arrogance and ignorance and childish behavior," the judge added. "Two people's lives are ruined and you could be a third. You need to thank your attorney and the prosecutor for this agreement … You're lucky you're not here for being an accessory to murder and going to prison."

Also Friday, a South Bend youth will have the chance to keep four felony charges off his record.

TUTSON

Anthony Tutson, 20, of South Bend, pleaded guilty to third degree fleeing police, delivery/manufacture of marijuana and two counts of resisting and obstructing police and was sentenced to two years probation under the Holmes Youthful Training Act, credit for three days served and $2,532 in fines and costs.

The incident occurred May 25 in Newberg Township near Jones. Tutson initially fled from police after an attempted traffic stop and then resisted and obstructed police. A large quantity of marijuana was found on him when he was arrested.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# LMC names Dr. Ken Flowers as next president

**SUBMITTED**

BENTON HARBOR — The Lake Michigan College Board of Trustees has named Dr. Ken Flowers as the school's next president.

Dr. Flowers brings more than 28 years of experience in higher education, academic administration and workforce-aligned education.

"Dr. Flowers' leadership reflects the very best of Lake Michigan College," said Joan Smith, Chair of the Lake Michigan College Board of Trustees. "His deep understanding of our students, our community, and the role community colleges play in regional economic vitality make him exceptionally well-suited to lead LMC into its next chapter."

FLOWERS

Dr. Flowers currently serves as Executive Vice President at Lake Michigan College, providing strategic leadership for Academic and Student Affairs. Previously, Dr. Flowers served as Provost and Vice President of Academics, where he was the College's chief academic officer, leading all academic divisions including Career and Workforce Education, Health Sciences, and Arts and Sciences.

Over his career, Dr. Flowers has held numerous leadership roles at Lake Michigan College, including Dean of Career and Workforce Education, Director of Workforce Training and Development, Apprenticeship Coordinator, Department Chair, and Machining and Manufacturing Instructor. He began his professional journey in manufacturing, spending 14 years in the mold-making industry before transitioning to education.

Dr. Flowers holds an associate degree and Journeyman Moldmaker certificate from Lake Michigan College, a Bachelor of Applied Science from Siena Heights University, a master's degree in Career and Technical Education from Ferris State University, and a doctorate in Educational Leadership from Western Michigan University. His doctoral research focused on partnerships between community colleges and highly regulated industries to support workforce development.

In recognition of his leadership, Dr. Flowers was selected as a 2025–26 Aspen Rising Presidents Fellow by the Aspen Institute College Excellence Program, one of only 40 leaders chosen nationwide. He has also been named Postsecondary Professional of the Year by both the Michigan Association of Career and Technical Education and the Association for Career and Technical Education Region I and received the Patriot Award from the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve for his support of employees serving in the military.

"I am deeply honored to be selected as the next president of Lake Michigan College," said Dr. Flowers. "As an alumnus, faculty member, and administrator, this institution has shaped my life and career. I look forward to working with the Board of Trustees, faculty, staff, students, and community partners to build on LMC's strong foundation and continue expanding opportunities for student success and regional impact."

Dr. Flowers resides in St. Joseph, Michigan, with his wife, Misty. They have two children, Austin and Lindsey, and two granddaughters, Ryatt and Blair.

# SMC's arts program attracts 'triple threat' from Watervliet

**By JOHN EBY**
Southwestern Michigan College

DOWAGIAC — Watervliet's Lauren Lovell is a triple threat for Southwestern Michigan College, playing clarinet and tenor saxophone, singing and appearing in "Shrek: The Musical" last March.

When she finishes her associate degree in instrumental music in May, the Nov. 7 Founders Day speaker hopes to transfer to Western Michigan University and ultimately become a band or choir director.

"I'm leaning more toward band," she said.

As a Roadrunner, Lovell has an unusual perspective from working as music librarian for Director of Bands Mark Hollandsworth, whose wife, Jennifer, was her band director when she was a Panther.

"It's funny because they're similar, but also very different people," she said. "Mr. H. is very organized, but she's even more organized and prepared me well for music theory."

Director of Choral Activities David Carew first approached her about attending SMC when she was singing for Watervliet's choir director Tami Brush freshman year.

"I wasn't even thinking about college yet," Lovell said. "Senior year, I was talking to Mr. H. about coming here and auditioning for scholarships and he called me a triple threat: 'You do everything.'

"I came to SMC because of the arts program. I originally thought of vet tech, but I switched to music senior year, and I knew SMC's music ed program was good with a good reputation when it came to the arts.

"I knew I would be paying for it myself and didn't want to take out crazy amounts of student loans. My parents support me, but my mom lost her job senior year."

Lovell was "excited" to hear about the Room to Grow campaign addressing fine arts needs in the Dale A. Lyons Building, where the long, rectangular choir room was originally set up for offices, not musical instruction.

Hollandsworth's band room is more than 30 years old and needs to be enlarged for additional rehearsal and practice space.

The expanded choir room features a round design, allowing singers and Carew to see and hear each other while practicing.

The band room, containing instrument storage space, is too small, accommodating chairs for just 40 members.

The new band room provides an additional 1,980 square feet to accommodate 20 additional members and a more open rehearsal space.

The Jazz Ensemble gains a dedicated practice area.

Photo provided

Lauren Lovell plays tenor sax in jazz ensemble.

A flexible multipurpose classroom will host music theory classes.

Four ensemble rooms and six practice rooms will give groups more flexibility and practice space.

"I'm kind of sad I'll be transferring before I see it," said Lovell, a Dean's List student last spring. "It looks like a really good, bigger space and more open. The room gets packed. It's cramped. I'm also excited about the new practice spaces."

Advice for future Roadrunners would be to "find instructors you mesh with because you work so closely together," like her vocal instructor, Megan Laine, whom she credits with building her confidence by "getting me out of my head. If I'm overthinking, she calls me out on it. And be willing to be coachable and to try new things. Carew and Mr. H. push me a lot."

This year Lovell, who transitioned from singing soprano to alto, benefited from the Lyons Memorial Scholarship and the Ruth Sarabyn Memorial Scholarship, named for Academic Dean, School of Applied Arts, Business and Technology Dr. Karen Reilly's mother.

Lovell's first year she landed arts scholarships for theatre, band and choir.

"Books are really the only thing I've had to pay for, and even then I had an outside scholarship, a 4-H equine scholarship," Lovell said.

She is an accomplished horsewoman who shows at the Berrien County Youth Fair in Berrien Springs, with one year of eligibility remaining.

She leases her horse, cleaning stalls and feeding him twice a week. "Then I get to ride. Over the summer I worked at (J.W. Morlock and Girls Fruitstand, Watervliet)."

In high school she played soccer until a knee injury made her manager senior year.

She was involved in Student Council, National Honor Society, Color Guard assistant section leader in marching band, 4-H Leaders Council vice president, choir secretary and band librarian.

"I organized music for Mrs. H, which is literally what I do here and get paid for. I did it in high school for volunteer hours."

Learn more about the Room to Grow capital campaign by visiting givebutter.com/roomtogrow or contact Emily Schrock at eschrock02@swmich.edu.

## CASSOPOLIS

From page A1

the Cassopolis Area Utilities Authority, including around $900,000 in engineering costs by Wightman.

Trustee James Pedersen raised concerns about sewer problems in the village and about being unable to chemically treat sections of Stone Lake due to being designated as wetlands by the State of Michigan Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy, questioning whether residents should continue to be charged for such treatments by the Stone Lake Improvement Board going forward.

Village President David Johnson congratulated village staff for their recent accomplishments in a training and adding to their credentials. Village Manager Emilie LaGrow noted that Department of Public Works Superintendent & Street Administrator Ben Anderson and a former village employee taught the class for both village staff and for staff from other nearby communities.

Trustee Asali Kelly noted the importance of clean up of various areas in the village, particularly near the beach, to make them more attractive.

Village offices will be closed on December 24-26, 31, and January 1 for the various holidays. There will be no workshop meeting on December 29. Regular village council meetings are scheduled to resume in 2026 at 6 p.m. Monday, Jan. 12.

EDWARDSBURG

## More than $20K of stolen property recovered

**By MAXWELL HARDEN**
max.harden@leaderpub.com

EDWARDSBURG — More than $20,000 worth of stolen property was recovered at an Edwardsburg residence Friday, according to the Cass County Sheriff's Office.

Deputies executed a search warrant Friday at an address on US 12 in the Village of Edwardsburg. Investigators were following up on a tip and did identify and recover property that had been stolen from locations in Mason and Jefferson Townships.

Deputies were able to return all of the seized property, estimated to exceed $20,000, to its rightful owners. The Ontwa Township Edwardsburg Police Department and the Cass County Drug Enforcement Team assisted the Sheriff's Office with the investigation.


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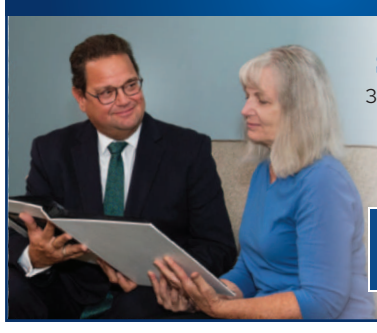
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# Sports

Niles basketball splits with Sturgis
Page B2

**Got results?**
max.harden@leaderpub.com

# Buchanan girls beat Cassopolis 61-23

**By MAXWELL HARDEN**
max.harden@leaderpub.com

BUCHANAN — The Buchanan girls basketball team gave the home crowd plenty to celebrate Wednesday night.

The Bucks defeated visiting Cassopolis 61-23 in their home opener at Buchanan High School.

Buchanan led 18-5 at the end of the first quarter, 27-7 at halftime and led by as many as 40 in the game.

"We came in and we had our game plan and we executed," said Buchanan coach Alex Austin. "The press worked really well, we were rotating in our zone and ball movement was fantastic."

Gabby Carson led Buchanan with 16 points and Reese Berry had 11 points while Justyce Cashier and Makynna Williams scored eight points apiece.

Maddlyn Yakel scored 10 points to lead Cassopolis.

"We didn't come already," said Cassopolis coach Stefon Luckey. "I think it was kind of like a premeditated doubt. We lost to them pretty bad last year and it was already in their brains and a couple of my leaders weren't ready at all."

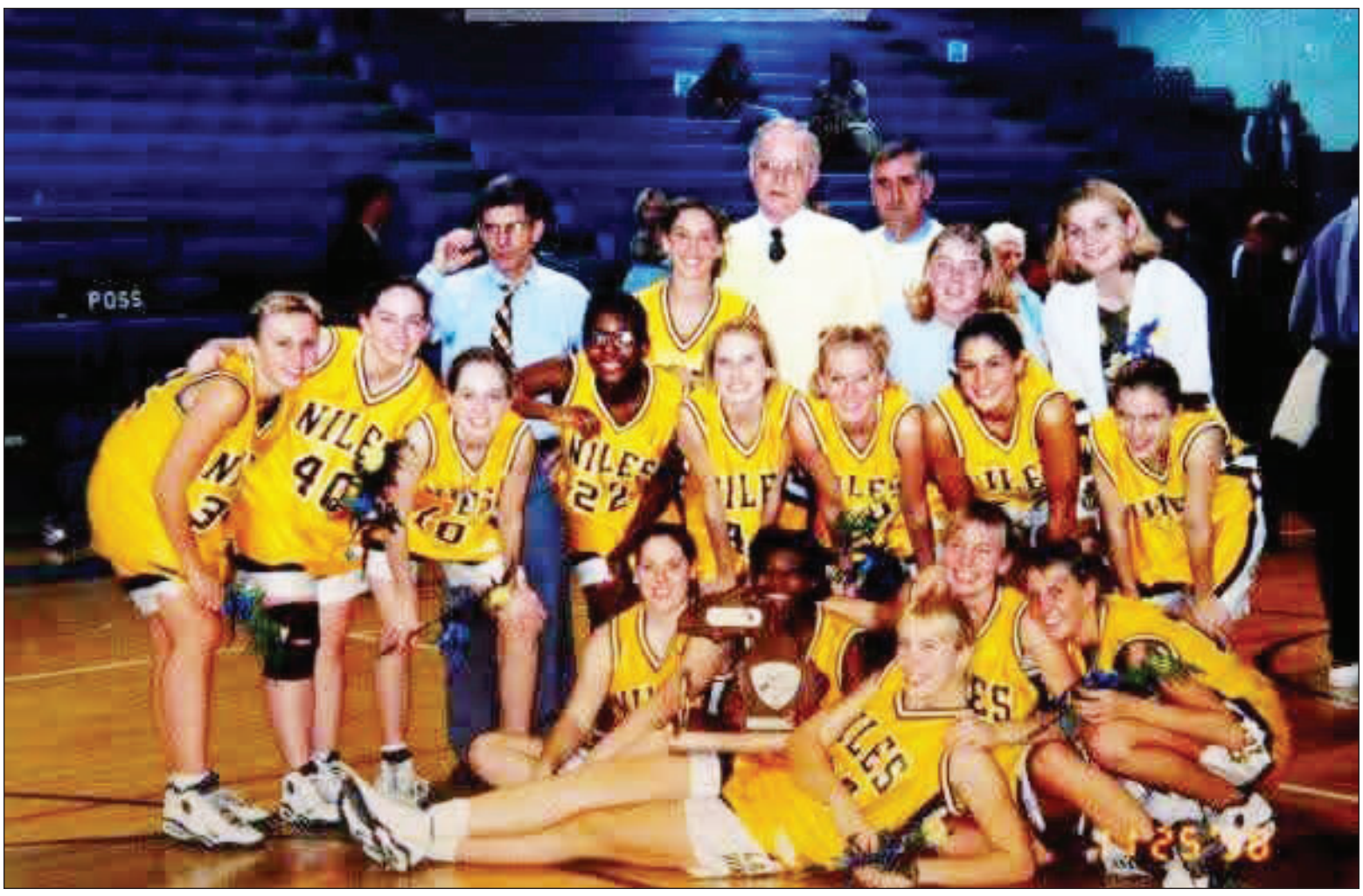
The Rangers (2-1) look to flip the script Friday with a road matchup at Centreville.

"Hopefully that goes a little better, Luckey said. "This game was a learning experience, they're in the same conference as Berrien Springs and Brandywine and are different level teams and we are trying to get there. I think we can but we have to nip some stuff in the bud."

See **BUCHANAN**, page B1

Maxwell Harden / Leader Publications

# A lasting legacy



Photos provided

**Under Jim Arnold's watch, Niles captured seven conference titles, 10 district championships and five regional crowns.**

## Jim Arnold remembered for lessons taught on and off the court

**By SCOTT HASSINGER**
For Leader Publications

NILES — Throughout his 22-year career coaching varsity girls' basketball at Niles High School, Jim Arnold required one thing from his players.

Just have fun.

"Jim always stressed to his players that the one thing he wanted them to do when on the floor was to just have fun playing the game," said George Brawley, who served 15 seasons as one of Arnold's assistant coaches at various levels.

Arnold, 81, passed away on Tuesday, Dec. 9 following an extended illness.

But throughout his career, Arnold's teams did much more than just enjoy themselves. The Benton Harbor native built a highly successful program at Niles where he achieved an overall win-loss record of 358-137, including a total of 19 winning seasons. Under Arnold's watch, the Lady Vikings captured seven conference titles, 10 district championships and five regional crowns.

Arnold also coached Niles to back-to-back district championships in softball in 1993 and 1994.

As a young athlete himself, Arnold excelled on the baseball diamond.

A successful player while at Benton Harbor, Arnold also played for the Twin City American Legion team winning districts. A big highlight for him was having the opportunity to hit against Satchel Paige. He was known as a leader on the field, a team captain and a coach on the field.

Arnold later had an invitation to try out at the professional level for the Baltimore Orioles but an injury ended his pursuit of that dream.

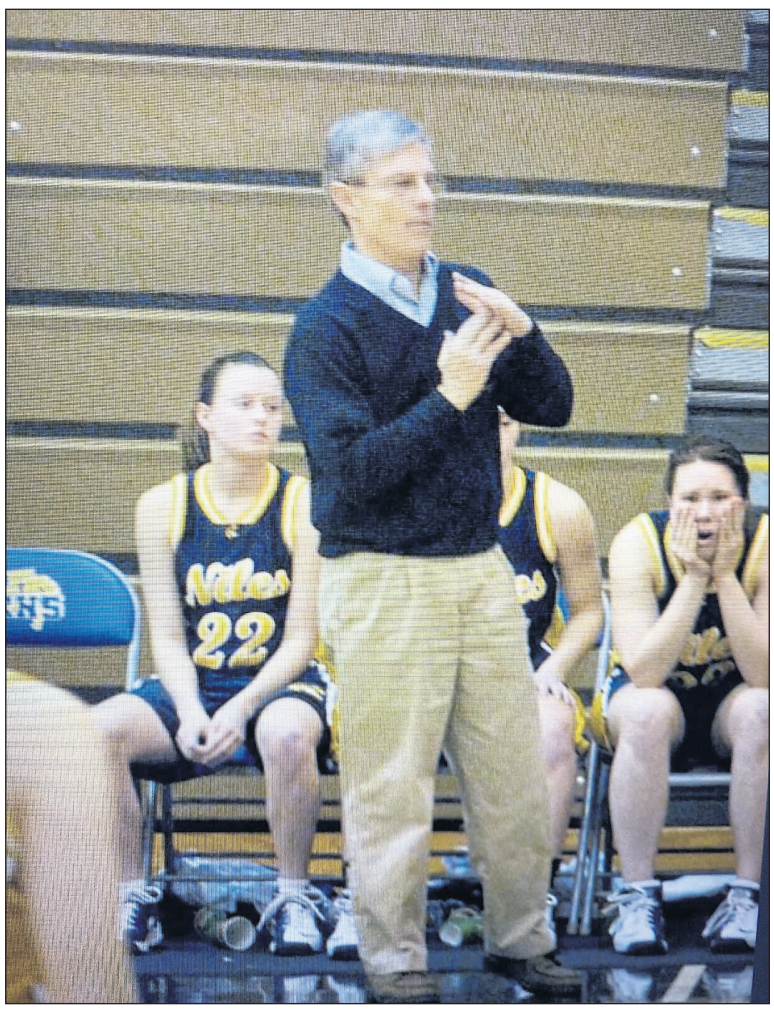
Arnold later played third base for Bargain Center, a slow-pitch softball team that won a regional championship and went on to play in the national title game in St. Louis, Mo.

His own two daughters Sonya and Allison were among the athletes that Arnold mentored in his coaching career. Sonya (Martinez), his oldest daughter, played for her father in eighth grade.

"He made the game fun and you wanted to do your best because you didn't want to disappoint him. He poured his heart into each and every practice and game because preparation mattered to him. He demanded excellence and every player became better because of his coaching ability," Sonya said.

Allison (Clay) his youngest daughter, played on the 1990 Niles varsity girls' squad that finished 25-1, including winning conference, district and regional titles.

"It was awesome playing for my dad. Some of my best memories in my life were during that time. He had high standards and inspired others to be the best version of themselves. He put his heart and soul into what he did and I had a front-row seat to that," Allison said.



**Niles coaching legend Jim Arnold signals for a timeout during a game during a storied 22-year career as the Vikings' girls basketball coach.**

Arnold's wife Linda has fond memories as a coach's wife.

See **ARNOLD**, page B1

# Favors drops 42 points as Niles beats Vicksburg

**By MAXWELL HARDEN**
max.harden@leaderpub.com

VICKSBURG — Brayden Favors had a game to remember Wednesday night.

The Niles star stuffed the stat sheet with a career-high 42 points on 17 of 20 shooting to help the Vikings earn a 91-73 victory over Vicksburg.

Niles started the game strong offensively with 33 first quarter points and 52 at halftime.

"Great win tonight," said Niles coach Mark Haase. "Brayden had a monster night. I've coached a lot of good players who have had big nights and this one is near the top of the list. He guarded [Vicksburg's] best player full court all night and had his best passing night of the year. It was a great performance."

Donny Williams had 17 points, Brenden Olsen scored 14 points and Ian Riggenbach finished with seven points.

"Donny played his best game all year," Haase said. "He played big and physical all night. Vicksburg made a couple runs but we always answered. It was a good win."

The Vikings hosted Paw Paw Thursday night and fell 66-59.

## Basketball scores

### Boys

#### Monday

- Buchanan 76, River Valley 21

#### Tuesday

- Lakeshore 65, Dowagiac 34
- Paw Paw 51, Edwardsburg 49 (OT)
- Cassopolis 69, Hartford 29

#### Thursday

- Berrien Springs 77, Dowagiac 28
- Edwardsburg 39, Sturgis 32

### Girls

#### Monday

- Dowagiac 44, New Buffalo 21
- Brandywine 57, Colon 38

#### Tuesday

- Paw Paw 48, Edwardsburg 28
- Cassopolis 64, Hartford 38

#### Wednesday

- Niles 58, Vicksburg 25
- Buchanan 61, Cassopolis 23

#### Thursday

- Niles 66, Paw Paw 63
- Berrien Springs 70, Dowagiac 43
- Sturgis 35, Edwardsburg 30

# Love, Moore earn unanimous All-America honors for Notre Dame

**NOTRE DAME ATHLETICS**

SOUTH BEND, Ind. — Junior running back Jeremiyah Love and sophomore cornerback Leonard Moore have each earned Unanimous All-America honors for the 2025 season, named First-Team All-Americans by each of the five recognized organizations: AFCA, Associated Press, FWAA, Sporting News and Walter Camp.

**LOVE**

**MOORE**

Love and Moore are the 112th and 113th Consensus All-Americans in Notre Dame football history and the 38th and 39th unanimous selections. The 2025 season marks the second since 1990 that the Irish have seen two student-athletes earn unanimous honors in the same year. College Football Hall of Fame inductees Raghib Ismail, Michael Stonebreaker and Chris Zorich were all unanimous selections in 1990, and current NFL standouts Joe Alt and Xavier Watts earned unanimous designation in 2023.

Notre Dame has seen at least one player earn at least Consensus All-America honors in six-consecutive seasons (Jeremiah Owusu-Koramoah in 2020, Kyle Hamilton in 2021, Michael Mayer and Isaiah Foskey in 2022, by Alt and Watts in 2023, Watts again in 2024, and Love and Moore this season). That six-year run of consensus honors is the best for the program since the eight-year stretch from 1987 through 1994.

See **HONORS**, page B1

## ARNOLD

From page B2

"I loved watching my husband coach because of the joy it brought him. His passion, intensity and the love he had for his players was genuine. It was more than a game, it was more about developing players in the area of discipline, teamwork and giving your all. Even in the busiest part of the season, he always made me feel like a priority. I didn't just watch a coach. I watched a man doing exactly what he was meant to do," Linda Arnold said.

"My husband coached with passion, but he loved his family with intention. My girls would go to his practices and we all attended his games and we had the team over for team dinners. His players were a part of our extended family. He made sure we felt a part. He was the best coach in the world and he was mine."

Jim Arnold was highly respected by his coaching peers. He was kind and treated everyone with dignity. The community of Niles knew what he stood for and they knew his standards were high. He was admired for his preparation and understanding of the game as well as his commitment to do things the right way. He was strict but fair and treated everyone the same whether you were the star player or last one off the bench Sonya stated.

"Developing his players' character was far more important to him than winning," Sonya said. "Dad lived what he taught. He modeled humility, hard work and lived a life of integrity. He made people better by being a part of their lives," Sonya said.

When Jim Arnold first began his junior high teaching career in Niles he also coached the boys' junior high basketball team. There were no girls' basketball teams at the time so a girl tried out for the boys' team. She was good enough to make the team so Arnold kept her. The following school year, the principal asked Arnold to organize a girls' team and the rest was history.

Former Niles varsity girls' basketball coach Jessica Johnson, a teammate of Allison's, recalls the experience of playing for Coach Arnold.

"Coach Arnold taught us discipline, resilience and always required 110 percent effort from you. He would instill confidence in you while still holding you accountable," said Johnson, now an assistant women's basketball coach at Southwestern Michigan College.

Johnson recalls Arnold's use of comic strips as a learning tool to improve upon mistakes made by his players.

"If you had a game where you didn't shoot very well or took questionable shots, he would place pictures of bricks in the gym the day following the game," Johnson said.

"Coach Arnold went out of his way to build that relationship and trust with his players. He gave us lessons that extended way beyond the court that made us better people."

Mark Haase, a Niles alumnus and now the Vikings' head varsity boys' basketball coach, also had the privilege of playing for Arnold.

"I played freshman basketball for Coach Arnold. It was one of the most disciplined and well-conditioned teams I ever played on. He ran a tight ship, but it was done out of love and concern for his players. He has a great family and is a Niles legend," Haase said.

Matt Brawley, Niles Athletic Director, referred to Arnold as an amazing teacher, coach and individual in the school and community.

"Coach Arnold would never ask you to do anything he wouldn't do. He was very structured and expected a lot out of his players and he got results without excuses. He was a true leader of Niles athletics. He was an unbelievably kind and humble individual," Brawley said.

# Niles basketball splits with Sturgis

**By SCOTT HASSINGER**
For Leader Publications

STURGIS — After enduring its worst shooting percentage of the season in Monday's 54-49 loss to Niles Brandywine, first-year Niles head boys' basketball coach Mark Haase knew his Vikings needed to shoot much better Friday to beat host Sturgis in their Wolverine Conference battle.

The Vikings made sure Haase had nothing to worry about as Niles used its size, quickness and athleticism to roll past the Trojans 60-46.

Niles dropped its season opener on the girls' side 63-28.

Niles' boys remain unbeaten in the Wolverine at 3-0 and improve to 3-2 overall. The loss drops Sturgis to 0-2 in the league and 1-3 overall.

"We're blessed with good size and athleticism. We probably outmatched them at most spots tonight. I give Sturgis a great deal of credit and I think Keith Kurowski is a great coach. They do a great job of trying to run some clock, make you grind a little bit more. Tonight was the first time we've seen zone all year and we did some decent things against it and got the ball to the middle pretty well. I thought we moved and shared the basketball better tonight than we have," Haase said.

Niles connected on 23 field-goal attempts, including seven triples, and made 7-of-9 free-throw attempts. In comparison, Sturgis converted 21 shots, including four three pointers, and went 0-for-3 at the foul stripe.

The Vikings showed its depth with eight different players scoring. Niles was led in the scorebook by five of its eight seniors. Brayden Favors led the way with 13 points. Brenden Olsen added 11, Acie Kirtdoll 10, Derrick Hill nine and 6-foot-9 center Donovyn Williams totaled eight.

Niles also held a commanding 37-28 rebounding edge. Williams ripped down 11 rebounds, Olsen eight and Bryce Zache added six boards.

"Derrick had a nice ballgame for us at both ends of the floor. Our back-up point guard Keon Kirtdoll was out tonight, but I thought Brayden did a nice job of handling the ball a little more than he's used to. Bryce Young got involved and made some big plays as well. It was a good team win and everyone contributed," Haase said.

Sturgis was paced in scoring by Lukas Bir with 16 points followed by Wyatt Miller with 13 and Oliver Lamb added six.

Sturgis' Gavin Lewis pulled down six rebounds.

Haase was pleased with how well his ballclub handled the first zone defense the Vikings' have seen this season.

Sturgis came out in a pair of matchup zone defenses to try and slow fast-paced Niles. The Trojans' efforts were ineffective for the most part, especially in the first half.

Niles scored the game's first six points and bolted out to a 20-8 advantage by the end of the first quarter. Kirtdoll scored seven points, while Favors and Olsen contributed five each to lead the Vikings' early surge.

Isaiah Qualls came off the bench and contributed a pair of three pointers in the second quarter as Niles outscored Sturgis 19-8 to build his squad a 39-16 halftime advantage.

Olsen's putback and a Bryce Zache charity toss extended Niles' lead to 30 points, 48-18 with a little over four minutes left in the third quarter. Hill's triple capped off a 16-9 Vikings' run in the stanza and sent the guests into the fourth quarter holding a comfortable 45-25 lead.

Sturgis showed some spark by outscoring Niles 21-5 during the fourth quarter, including 14 points from Lukas Bir.

"I'm really impressed with Niles and their unselfishness. I don't think one guy had more than 16 points. They have lots of size, athleticism and balance. Offensively they are patient and spread the ball and they play the right way. Tonight they were just a tough matchup. We had some early troubles. Niles came out like gangbusters in that first quarter and they continued that torrid pace in the second. We didn't have many answers against them in that first half. We tried a couple different matchup zones and they figured it out enough to shoot some high percentages," Sturgis head coach Keith Kurowski said. ""Give them credit for coming in here with focus and a sense of urgency to really put the game out of reach by halftime. Our kids battled and showed a little resiliency in that second half."

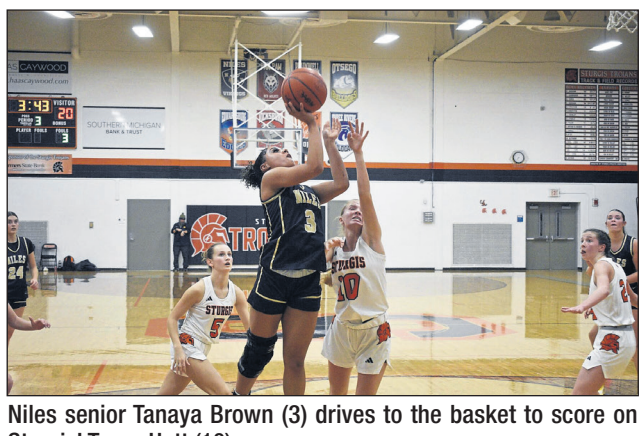
Haase is excited about the rest of the season, citing that his team's size and experience will determine how successful the Vikings are this winter.

"We have eight seniors and four juniors so we have alot of kids who have played varsity basketball. When you have alot of guys who can score that's nice. Sturgis did a nice job of not giving us as many runaway buckets as we've been getting," Haase said.

"We talk about four championships. You start with a league championship, then a district and regional. Then if you can get into a long tournament run you very well could contend for a state crown. We have a tough week coming up with Vicksburg on Tuesday and Paw Paw on Friday. Those are two of the other toughest teams in the league and then we play South Bend Riley next Saturday," Haase added.

Photos by Scott Hassinger / For Leader Publications

Bryce Zache (21) from Niles drives inside for a layup against Sturgis.



Niles senior Tanaya Brown (3) drives to the basket to score on Sturgis' Tessa Hatt (10).

### Girls Game

### Sturgis 63, Niles 28

Against one of the better defensive teams in the conference, the Niles girls' basketball team was in trouble early in an eventual 63-28 loss to Sturgis.

The Trojans were able to convert several Niles' turnovers into easy buckets throughout the contest.

Angela Cary of Sturgis poured in 10 of her 14 points during the first quarter to help spark the Lady Trojans to a commanding 21-6 advantage.

Niles found some offense during the second quarter, including a pair of three pointers from Austyn Rohacs. The Lady Vikings were outscored 16-13 by the Trojans in the second and trailed its hosts 37-19 at halftime.

Sturgis silenced any thoughts of a second-half comeback by Niles with a 13-1 run during the third quarter that put the Lady Trojans in front 50-20 entering the final period.

Niles, now 0-1 after its season opener, must regroup very quickly with league heavyweights Vicksburg and Paw Paw on next week's schedule followed by a non-league matchup with St. Joseph.

Tanaya Brown ended the night with 12 points to lead Niles, while Ali Gerrits and Rohachs finished with six apiece.

"We didn't execute very well tonight and turned the basketball over alot. We have alot to work on, especially defense and rebounding," Niles coach Sarah Workman said.

Sturgis was paced in scoring by Sydney Bir with a game-high 20 points. Cary and Kinder Smith both added 14 each and Cora Phillips finished with five for the Lady Trojans, now 1-0 in the league and 2-0 overall.

## BUCHANAN

From page B2

The Bucks (1-2) hope to carry momentum into Friday as rival Brandywine (3-0) comes to town for a 5:30 p.m. tipoff. The Bobcats defeated the Bucks in both matchups.

"It's just gonna be incredible," Austin said. "Last year, we didn't have very good encounters with Brandywine, the games weren't close. They came in, they ran their stuff and they executed them. That was a team that won every single game up until they lost in the playoffs. That's a different looking team this year, we're a different looking team this year but what it's just going to come down to is discipline and execution. [Brandywine coach Josh Hood] has that team running everything right to a T. If you don't run it right, you're not gonna play for him so that we need to counter that. We need to be disciplined and not let them execute their game plan and we're gonna have a lot of fun here on Friday.

"Win or lose the environment here is going to be insane."

Maxwell Harden / Leader Publications

## HONORS

From page B2

Love, the winner of the Doak Walker Award for the best running back in college football and the recipient of the 2025 Disney Spirit Award for the most inspirational figure in college football, was a finalist for the Heisman Trophy, the Walter Camp Player of the Year and the Maxwell Award. Moore was a finalist for the Nagurski Trophy and the Paycom Jim Thorpe Award.

### Jeremiyah Love

This season, Love posted 199 rushes for 1,372 yards and 18 touchdowns, adding 27 receptions for 280 yards and three touchdowns. He averaged 6.9 yards per rush on the season. Even more impressive, he did it all while sharing a backfield with fellow running back Jadarian Price, who himself totaled 113 rushes for 674 yards and 11 touchdowns.

Six FBS players rushed for 1,300 yards during the 2025 regular season. Love is the only player on that list who shares the backfield with another running back who has also rushed for at least 600 yards this season.

He was the only player in the nation to rank in the top three in scoring, total touchdowns and yards from scrimmage to conclude the regular season.

Love was the only player in the country to both own more than 1,100 rushing yards on the season and average 6.6 or more yards per carry.

At the end of the regular season, Love continued to rank as one of the most outstanding players in college football, ranking second nationally in scoring (10.5), second in total points (126), second in total touchdowns (21) third in rushing touchdowns (18), fourth in rushing yards (1,372), fifth in rushing yards per game (114.3), fifth in yards per carry (6.89) and fifth in all-purpose yards (137.67).

Love posted eight carries for 171 yards and three touchdowns in the 70-7 win over Syracuse, averaging 21.4 yards per carry. He is just the third player since 1996 to have 170 or more rushing yards and three touchdowns on eight carries or less (Clyde Edwards-Helaire, 1 1/2 3/19 vs. Arkansas and Desmond Ridder, 10/24/20 vs. SMU).

In Notre Dame's 49-20 win over Stanford, Love rushed for a touchdown on Notre Dame's opening drive, making him Notre Dame's single-season leader in total touchdowns (21), surpassing the legendary Jerome Bettis' 20 in 1991. The rushing touchdown was also Love's 18th of the season on the ground, tying Audric Estimé (2023) for most rushing touchdowns in a single season in Notre Dame history. He is the first player in program history to have multiple seasons with 17 or more rushing touchdowns.

This season, Love was named the Associated Press National Player of the Week and the Doak Walker National Running Back of the Week for his impressive performance against No. 20 USC. Love racked up 228 rushing yards on 24 carries to average 9.5 yards per carry in a 34-24 win over USC in the Jeweled Shillelagh rivalry contest. The 228 rushing yards Love put up against USC are the most for a Notre Dame player in a single game in Notre Dame Stadium's 513-game history.

Love became the first player in program history to collect two 90-yard rushing touchdowns in a career with a 98-yard effort against Indiana in the College Football Playoff in 2024 and a 94-yard score at Boston College in 2025.

### Leonard Moore

Moore, also a semifinalist for the Bednarik Award and the Lott IMPACT Trophy, ended the regular season with five total interceptions through 10 games played, ranking second in the country in interceptions per game (0.5). He also ranked third nationally in total interceptions (5) and eighth nationally in passes defended per game (1.2).

He was first among all starting Power 4 cornerbacks in coverage grade (92.6) and first in defensive grade (92.0) according to Pro Football Focus. Because of his lockdown abilities, Moore was only targeted by opposing quarterbacks on 12.06 percent of coverage snaps in which he was on the field. For every reception he allowed this season, he posted 15.31 coverage snaps.

At the midway point of the 2025 season, Moore had already made a statement, earning seven midseason first-team All-America honors, including by The Associated Press, The Sporting News, CBS Sports, The Athletic, Sports Illustrated, Pro Football Focus and Athlon Sports.

In just 10 games played this season, Moore has posted five interceptions, including a 46-yard pick six. He has posted 12 total passes defended, 31 tackles, seven pass breakups and a forced fumble. With Moore's help, at the end of the regular season, Notre Dame led the nation in interceptions (tied – 21 total INTs), and ranked fourth in turnover margin (1.08), ninth in team sacks (2.92), 11th in rushing defense (99.3), 13th in scoring defense (17.6) and 13th in team passing efficiency defense (108.80).

Moore's fourth interception of the season came on a 46-yard pick six in Notre Dame's 70-7 win over Syracuse. Moore's touchdown, the first of his career, put the Irish up 21-0 before the offense even had a chance to take the field.

Two of Moore's interceptions came in the same game vs. Boise State, a career-best performance. For his performance that week, he was named the Walter Camp FBS Defensive Player of the Week and the Paycom Jim Thorpe Award Defensive Back of the Week. He became the first Notre Dame player to have multiple interceptions in the same game since 2023 (Xavier Watts).

The 2024 FWAA Freshman Defensive Player of the Year, Moore entered the 2025 season with several accolades, as he was named to the Preseason All-America First Team lists by Walter Camp, The Sporting News, the Associated Press, The Athletic, ESPN, CBS Sports, Athlon Sports and Phil Steele. He was named to watch lists for the Bronko Nagurski Trophy, Paycom Jim Thorpe Award, Chuck Bednarik Award and Lott IMPACT Trophy.

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## 0900 LEGALS

**STATE OF MICHIGAN**
**PROBATE COURT**
**Cass COUNTY**

**NOTICE TO CREDITORS**
**Decedent's Estate**

**CASE NO. and JUDGE**
2025-258-DE
Hon. Carol M. Bealor

**Estate of:** Duane Herman Butcher**, Deceased**
**Date of birth:** June 25, 1945

**TO ALL CREDITORS: ****

**NOTICE TO CREDITORS:**
The decedent, Duane Herman Butcher, died 01-07-2025. Creditors of the decedent are notified that all claims against the estate will be forever barred unless presented to Staci Bates, personal representative, or to both the probate court at 60296 M-62, Cassopolis, MI 49031 and the personal representative within 4 months after the date of publication of this notice.

Date December 11, 2025

Robert W. LaBre, J.D. P74085
**Attorney name** **Bar no.**
68897 S. Cass St
**Address**
Edwardsburg, MI 49112
**City, state, zip**
269-663-8554
**Telephone no.**

Staci Bates
**Personal representative name**
60348 Bair Lake St.
**Address**
Jones, MI 49061
**City, state, zip**

## 0900 LEGALS

**STATE OF MICHIGAN**
**PROBATE COURT**
**COUNTY OF BERRIEN**

**PUBLICATION OF NOTICE AND CREDITORS NOTICE**

FILE NO 2025-0972-DE-R

**ESTATE OF:** Mike Edward Chamberlin
Date of Birth: September 22, 1963

**TO ALL INTERESTED PERSONS** including creditors and heirs of the deceased whose address(es) are unknown and whose interest in the matter may be barred or affected by the following:

Be advised that a Petition for Determination of Heirs has been filed with the Court and a hearing on said Petition will be held on January 27, 2026, at 9:15 A.M. via Zoom through the Berrien County Court House, 811 Port Street, Niles, Michigan 49120

NOTICE TO CREDITORS: The Decedent, Mike Edward Chamberlin, who lived at 633 Clark Street, Niles, Michigan, September July 27, 2025.

Creditors of the Decedent are notified that all claims against the estate will be forever barred unless presented to John Nemeth, named personal representative, or to the probate court at 811 Port Street, Saint Joseph, Michigan 49085 and the named personal representative within four (4) months after the date of publication of this notice.

December 20, 2025

Robert L. Landgraf, Jr. (P23000)
Attorney
Post Office Box 1310
Niles, Michigan 49120
(269) 683 - 8300

**John Nemeth**
Petitioner
c/o Post Office Box 1310
Niles, Michigan 49120-1310

**STATE OF MICHIGAN**
**PROBATE COURT**
**COUNTY OF Cass**

**NOTICE TO CREDITORS**
**Decedent's Estate**

**FILE NO.**
2025-314-DE

**Estate of:**
Terry Randolph Hogman
**Date of birth:** 12/30/1945

**TO ALL CREDITORS: ***

**NOTICE TO CREDITORS:**
The decedent, Terry Randolph Hogman, died 11/01/2025. Creditors of the decedent are notified that all claims against the estate will be forever barred unless presented to Rita-Elayn Tamandli, 69434 Elkhart Road, Edwardsburg, MI 49112, personal representative, or to both the probate court at 60296 M-62, Suite 10, Cassopolis, MI 49031 and the personal representative within 4 months after the date of publication of this notice.

**Date** 10/10/2025

Malcolm J. Tuesley P24791
**Attorney name** **Bar no.**
212 E. LaSalle Ave., Ste 100
**Address**
South Bend, IN 46617
**City, state, zip**
574-232-3538
**Telephone**

Rita-Eylan Tamandli
**Personal representative**
69434 Elkhart Road
**Address**
Edwardsburg, MI 49112
**City, state, zip**
214-663-8064
**Telephone**

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## 0900 LEGALS

**STATE OF MICHIGAN**
**PROBATE COURT**
**CASS COUNTY**

**NOTICE TO CREDITORS**
**Decedent's Estate**

**CASE NO. and JUDGE**
2025-316-DE

**Court address & phone no.**
60296 M-62,
Cassopolis, MI 49031
(269) 445-4475

**Estate of:**
Deborah Ann Gonzalez, Deceased
**Date of Birth:*** 6/26/1962

**TO ALL CREDITORS: ****

**NOTICE TO CREDITORS:**
The decedent, Deborah Ann Gonzalez, died 09/10/2025. Creditors of the decedent are notified that all claims against the estate will be forever barred unless presented to Jamie Handshoe, personal representative, or to both the probate court at 61216 N. Main St, Jones, MI 49061 and the personal representative within 4 months after the date of publication of this notice.

**Date** December 9, 2025

Gwendolyn Powell Braswell P79797
**Attorney name** **Bar no.**
500 Renaissance Drive, Suite 104A
**Address**
Saint Joseph, MI 49085
**City, state, zip**
269-932-4017
**Telephone no.**

Jamie Handshoe
**Personal representative**
61216 N. Main Street
**Address**
Jones, MI 49061
**City, state, zip**
(574)298-0492
**Telephone no.**

**STATE OF MICHIGAN**
**43rd CIRCUIT COURT**

**ORDER FOR SERVICE BY PUBLICATION/POSTING AND NOTICE OF ACTION**

**CASE NO. 25-000628-CZ**

**PLAINTIFF'S NAME:**
Edwardsburg Estates MHC, LLC
C/O-Plaintiff's Attorney

**PLAINTIFF'S ATTORNEY:**
The Law Offices of Aaron D. Cox, PLLC
By: Aaron D. Cox (P69346)
/Elizabeth E. Ellison (P82098)
23820 Eureka Road Taylor, MI 48180
Phone: 734-287-3664

**V.**

**DEFENDANTS:**
The Unknown Heirs, Devisees, and Assigns of Otto Krueger

**TO THE ABOVE NAMED-DEFENDANTS**
**IT IS ORDERED:**
**1.** You are being sued in this court by the plaintiff to terminate ownership interests in the 1978 Holly Park Manufactured Home (VIN 6027388) and declare manufactured home abandoned. You must file your answer or take other action permitted by law in this court at the court address above on or before 28 days from the date of last service. If you fail to do so, a default judgment may be entered against you for the relief demanded in the complaint filed in this case.
**2.** A copy of this order shall be published once each week in THE DOWAGIAC DAILY NEWS (LEADER PUBLICATIONS) for three consecutive weeks, and proof of publication shall be filed in this court.
**3.** shall post a copy of this order in the courthouse, and at 69425 M-62, Lot # 2, Edwardsburg, Michigan 49112 (Site of Manufactured Home).
**4.** A copy of this order shall be sent to THE ABOVE-NAMED DEFENDANTS at the last-known address by registered mail, return receipt requested, before the date of last publication, and the affidavit of mailing shall be filed with this court.

Hon. Mark A. Herman (P34735)
**JUDGE**
**DATE** 11/18/2025

White Space Sells

## 0900 LEGALS

**CALVIN TOWNSHIP**
**CASS COUNTY, MICHIGAN**
**NOTICE OF ADOPTION/ SUMMARY OF ORDINANCE**

TO: THE RESIDENTS AND PROPERTY OWNERS OF CALVIN TOWNSHIP, CASS COUNTY, MICHIGAN, AND ANY OTHER INTERESTED PERSONS:
**PLEASE TAKE NOTICE** that the following is a summary of Ordinance No. 25-01 adopted by the Township Board of Calvin Township at its regular meeting of December 9, 2025, effective on the 8th day after this publication.
**ORDINANCE NO. 25-01**
**REZONING AND MAP AMENDMENT**
SECTION I. REZONING OF SECTION 12. Those parcels in Section 12 that had an A-1 district zoning classification are rezoned to the A-2 Agricultural District Zoning Classification such that all of Section 12 in Calvin Township is zoned A-2. The Township Zoning Map is amended to reflect the entirety of Section 12 of the township zoning as A-2.
**SECTION II. EFFECTIVE DATE AND REPEAL.** Conflicting ordinance provisions are repealed. The effective date is the 8th day after this publication.
**PLEASE TAKE FURTHER NOTICE** that the full text of the Ordinance has been posted at the Calvin Township Hall, 18727 Mt. Zion Road, and that copies of the Ordinance may be purchased or inspected by contacting the Calvin Township Clerk at the address and telephone number set forth below.

Michelle Anderson, Clerk
CALVIN TOWNSHIP
PO Box 305
18727 Mt. Zion Road
Cassopolis, MI 49031
(269) 476-2620
www.calvintownship.com

**STATE OF MICHIGAN**
**PROBATE COURT**
**CASS COUNTY**

**NOTICE TO CREDITORS**
**Decedent's Estate**

**CASE NO. 2025-305-DE**

Estate of Mary E. York
Date of Birth: 8/29/1938

**TO ALL CREDITORS:**

**NOTICE TO CREDITORS:** The decedent, Mary E. York, died 11-19-2024. Creditors of the decedent are notified that all claims against the estate will be forever barred unless presented to Rana Kruger, Nominee of Guardianships & Alternatives, Inc., personal representative, or to both the probate court at 60296 M-62, Cassopolis, MI 49031 and the personal representative within 4 months after the date of publication of this notice.

Attorney Name:
Elizabeth M. Siefker, P83791
201 W. Big Beaver Road, Suite 1200
Troy, MI 48084
517-827-3235

Date: 12/3/2025

Personal Representative:
Rana Kruger, Nominee of Guardianships & Alternatives, Inc
P.O. Box 240
Dowagiac, MI 49047
269-782-2953

**PUBLIC NOTICE**
Jefferson Township Board of Trustees Regular Meeting Synopsis, December 11, 2025

Supervisor Hass called the December 11, 2025, meeting to order at 6:30 PM with board members present: Brunner, Bundle, Gillam, Hass. Absent: Mendenhall.

REGULAR MEETING
BOARD ACTION
• November 13, 2025, meeting minutes were approved.
•Treasurer's Report was given.
•Payment of bills was authorized.

Respectfully submitted,
Jennifer Brunner, Clerk

Classifieds Make A Cash Connection!

## 0900 LEGALS

**SILVER CREEK TOWNSHIP**
**November 12, 2025**
**Meeting Summary**
Meeting Called to Order at 6:30pm. Pledge was recited. All Board members present. Agenda, Minutes, and Bills and Claims were approved. Updates and Reports were given or provided.
**The following motions all passed:**
**Motion to approve** the WC insurance quote in the amount of $3,883
**Motion to approve** the EMC Insurance Policy in the amount of $16,048
**Motion to extend** the winter tax bill deadline, with no interest added to payments received by 5pm on March 2, 2026
**Motion to approve** the ESTA Policy
**Meeting adjourned** at 7:27pm. Detailed minutes are available on the township website: www.silvercreektwpmi.gov

**JESS HONN, CLERK**

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Case No. 24-000609-CH Circuit Court Sale In pursuance and by virtue of an Order Granting Motion for Default Judgment and for Judicial Foreclosure as to All Defendants in the Circuit Court for the County of Cass, State of Michigan, made and entered on the 4th of August, A.D., 2025 in a certain cause therein pending, wherein CitiMortgage, Inc. was the Plaintiff and Any and all heirs, Assignees and Devisees of Esther A. Gogley and Rosalie Simpson were the Defendants. NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that I shall sell at public auction to the highest bidder, at public vendue, at the Cass County Courthouse (that being the place of holding the Circuit Court for said County), on the 14th of January, A.D., 2026 at 10:00 o`clock in the forenoon, Eastern Standard Time, the following described property, viz: A certain piece or parcel of land situated in the Township of Penn, County of Cass, State of Michigan: LOT NUMBER TEN (10), IN THE VILLAGE OF JAMESTOWN, ACCORDING TO THE RECORDED PLAT THEREOF. 14-100-100-010-00 c/k/a: 19125 Quaker St, Cassopolis, MI 49031 The redemption period shall be 6 months from the date of such sale. Clint Roach, Deputy Sheriff _/s/ Melissa Z. Prantzalos Melissa Z. Prantzalos of Schneiderman & Sherman P.C. Attorney for CitiMortgage, Inc. Schneiderman & Sherman P.C. 23938 Research Dr, Suite 300 Farmington Hills, MI 48335 1576877 (11-15)(12-20)

**Synopsis of the Minutes of the Ontwa Township Board of Trustees Monday, December 8th, 2025**
The regular meeting of the Ontwa Township Board of Trustees was called to order at 6:00pm.
Pledge of Allegiance
Roll Call
Approval of the Agenda
Public Comment
Approval of Consent Agenda
Commissioner's Report: Commissioner Marchetti
Committee Board Reports:

* Wastewater - Brigid Forlenza (no report)
* Zoning Administrator Report - Dawn Bolock
* Ambulance - Trustee Stutsman
* Buildings & Grounds - Trustee Stutsman
* Planning Commission - Trustee Stutsman
* Township Roads - Trustee Kozinski (no report)
* Parks Board - Trustee Kozinski (no report)
* Police - Trustee Marchetti (no report)
* Adamsville Cemetery Board - Supervisor Christensen
* Fire Board - Clerk VanBelle

Old Business: Elkhart Road Project
New Business: 2026 Ontwa Township Poverty Guidelines, Budget Resolution, Bender Electric Quote for Ambulance, Board Appointments
Schedule of Township meetings: Township Board Meeting will be January 12th, Ambulance Board Meeting December 10th, Police Board Meeting December 11th, Planning Commission Meeting January 7th, Wastewater Board Meeting December 17th.
Meeting Adjourned 6:30pm Minutes of Board of Trustee meetings may be found on the Township website: www.ontwatwp.org
Respectfully submitted by Tina VanBelle, Ontwa Township Clerk
Approved for Publication by Supervisor Meryl Christensen

RESERVE THIS SPACE TODAY!

**INVITATION FOR BIDS**
**Drywall Systems Removal and Replacement**
**Shkwéngen Apartments, 500 Hill Street, Dowagiac, MI 49047**

The Pokagon Band Department of Housing & Community Development is seeking sealed bid proposals from qualified contractors for the Shkwéngen Drywall Systems Removal and Replacement Project at the Shkwéngen Apartments located at 500 Hill Street, Dowagiac, MI 49047. The project involves asbestos containing materials (ACM). The Deadline for submittal of Bids is 3:00 p.m., Wednesday, January 21, 2026, at which time there will be a Public Bid Opening at the Department of Housing and Community Development Offices at 57824 Potawatomi Trail, Dowagiac, Michigan 49047.

The project involves the careful disconnection from drywall systems and temporary relocation of existing fixtures and appurtenances, including but not limited to cabinetry, light fixtures, appliances, and countertops within each apartment unit, to facilitate ACM containing drywall systems removal and replacement. The intent is to reinstall and reuse the temporarily relocated items which must be protected from dust and debris during the removal of ACM-containing drywall systems. Approximately 60,000 square feet of affected drywall systems will be removed and properly disposed of from walls and ceilings across three two-story apartment buildings, which include 27 residential units and a common laundry room.

Following the removal and proper disposal of the affected drywall systems, environmental clearance will be confirmed to ensure the area is safe for reentry and reconstruction. New drywall systems will then be installed in compliance with applicable building codes and refinished to match the original appearance. Once the new systems are in place, all temporarily removed items will be reinstalled in their original locations. Any fixtures and appurtenances that were removed but not suitable for reuse will be replaced to restore each unit to its pre-removal condition.

Interested contractors may obtain a copy of the bid package, or further information by contacting: Robert Torzynski, Planning Manager, Department of Housing & Community Development by telephone at (269) 462-0688 or by email at: Robert.Torzynski@PokagonBand-nsn.gov.

Notice of Foreclosure by Advertisement
Notice is given under section 3212 of the revised judicature act of 1961, 1961 PA 236, MCL 600.3212, that the following mortgage will be foreclosed by a sale of the mortgaged premises, or some part of them, at a public auction sale to the highest bidder for cash or cashier's check at the place of holding the circuit court in Cass County, starting promptly at 10:00 AM, on January 14, 2026. The amount due on the mortgage may be greater on the day of sale. Placing the highest bid at the sale does not automatically entitle the purchaser to free and clear ownership of the property. A potential purchaser is encouraged to contact the county register of deeds office or a title insurance company, either of which may charge a fee for this information:
Name(s) of the mortgagor(s): Cheryl Reeves, a married couple and Ronald Reeves, a married couple
Original Mortgagee: ABN Amro Mortgage Group, Inc.
Foreclosing Assignee (if any): NewRez LLC d/b/a Shellpoint Mortgage Servicing
Date of Mortgage: February 16, 2001
Date of Mortgage Recording: March 2, 2001
Amount claimed due on date of notice: $25,159.23
Description of the mortgaged premises: Situated in Township of Wayne, Cass County, Michigan, and described as: Parcel 1:
Lots numbered 9 and 10, Block 44 Twin Shores, Wayne Township, according to the Plat thereof as recorded in Liber 1 of Plats, Page 156, Cass County Records.
Parcel 2:
Lots 27 and 28, Block 44, Twin Shores, a Subdivision, according to the recorded Plat thereof, recorded in the office of register of deed Cass County, Michigan, said Plat being situated in Sections 15 and 16, Wayne Township, Cass County, Michigan.
Common street address (if any): 52950 Chappel St, Dowagiac, MI 49047-9452
The redemption period shall be 1 year from the date of such sale, unless determined abandoned in accordance with MCL 600.3241a.
If the property is sold at foreclosure sale under Chapter 32 of the Revised Judicature Act of 1961, pursuant to MCL 600.3278 the borrower will be held responsible to the person who buys the property at the mortgage foreclosure sale or to the mortgage holder for damaging the property during the redemption period.
Attention homeowner: If you are a military service member on active duty, if your period of active duty has concluded less than 90 days ago, or if you have been ordered to active duty, please contact the attorney for the party foreclosing the mortgage at the telephone number stated in this notice.
This notice is from a debt collector.
Date of notice: December 13, 2025
Trott Law, P.C.
31440 Northwestern Hwy, Suite 145
Farmington Hills, MI 48334
(248) 642-2515 1579380 (12-13)(01-03)

NOTICE OF MORTGAGE FORECLOSURE SALE Notice of foreclosure by advertisement. Notice is given under section 3212 of the revised judicature act of 1961, 1961 PA 236, MCL 600.3212, that the following Mortgage will be foreclosed by a sale of the mortgaged premises, or some part of them, at a public auction sale to the highest bidder for cash or cashier's check at the place of holding the circuit court in Cass County, starting promptly at 10:00 AM, on February 11, 2026. The amount due on the Mortgage may be greater on the day of the sale. Placing the highest bid at the sale does not automatically entitle the purchaser to free and clear ownership of the property. A potential purchaser is encouraged to contact the county register of deeds office or a title insurance company, either of which may charge a fee for this information. Default has been made in the conditions of a Mortgage made by Richard K. Burkhart and Linda Burkhart to One Reverse Mortgage, LLC dated July 18, 2018 and recorded July 26, 2018 in Liber 1142 at Page 1901, Cass County, Michigan. Said Mortgage is now held by Longbridge Financial, LLC by assignment and/or merger. There is claimed to be due at the date hereof the sum of $133,134.49. Said premises are located in Cass County, Michigan and are described as: Land situated in the Township of Newberg in the County of Cass in the State of MI ALL THAT CERTAIN PIECE OR PARCEL OF LAND SITUATED IN THE TOWNSHIP OF NEWBERG, COUNTY OF CASS, AND STATE OF MICHIGAN, AND SPECIFICALLY DESCRIBED AS FOLLOWS, TO WIT: "THAT PART OF THE WEST HALF OF THE NORTHWEST QUARTER OF SECTION 31, TOWN 6 SOUTH, RANGE 13 WEST, NEWBERG TOWNSHIP, CASS COUNTY, MICHIGAN DESCRIBED AS; "PARCEL A" FROM THE WEST QUARTER CORNER OF SAID SECTION MEASURE SOUTH 89° 35' EAST, 446.90 FEET ALONG THE EAST AND WEST QUARTER LINE OF SAID SECTION; THENCE MEASURE NORTH 32° 50' EAST ALONG THE CENTER LINE OF LEWIS LAKE ROAD, 489.70 FEET; THENCE MEASURE NORTH 28° 55' EAST, 395.80 FEET; THENCE MEASURE NORTH 32° 50' EAST, 23.00 FEET TO THE POINT OF BEGINNING OF THE LAND HEREIN DESCRIBED; THENCE NORTH 75° 41' WEST, 179.99 FEET; THENCE NORTH 32° 38' EAST, 62.28 FEET; THENCE NORTH 80° 04' EAST, 232.60 FEET TO THE EAST LINE OF THE WEST HALF OF THE NORTHWEST QUARTER OF SAID SECTION; THENCE SOUTH 32° 50' WEST, 162.90 FEET TO THE POINT OF BEGINNING. ALSO INCLUDING ALL LANDS BETWEEN THE MOST WESTERLY DESCRIBED LINE AND THE WATERS EDGE OF LEWIS LAKE. CONTAINING 0.43 ACRES." Said property is commonly known as 61336 Lewis Lake Rd, Vandalia, MI 49095. The redemption period shall be 12 months from the date of such sale, unless determined abandoned in accordance with MCLA 600.3241a, in which case the redemption period shall be 30 days from the date of such sale. If the property is sold at foreclosure sale, pursuant to MCL 600.3278, the borrower will be held responsible to the person who buys the property at the mortgage foreclosure sale or to the mortgage holder for damage to the property during the redemption period. TO ALL PURCHASERS: The foreclosing mortgagee can rescind the sale. In that event, your damages, if any, are limited solely to the return of the bid amount tendered at sale, plus interest. Please be advised that any third party purchaser is responsible for preparing and recording the Sheriff's Deed. If this is a residential Mortgage, the following shall apply: ATTENTION HOMEOWNER: If you are a military service member on active duty, if your period of active duty has concluded less than 90 days ago, or if you have been ordered to active duty, please contact the attorney for the party foreclosing the Mortgage at the telephone number stated in this notice. THIS COMMUNICATION IS FROM A DEBT COLLECTOR. THIS IS AN ATTEMPT TO COLLECT A DEBT, AND ANY INFORMATION OBTAINED WILL BE USED FOR THAT PURPOSE. IF YOU: ARE A DEBTOR IN AN ACTIVE BANKRUPTCY CASE; ARE UNDER THE PROTECTION OF A BANKRUPTCY STAY; OR, HAVE RECEIVED A DISCHARGE IN BANKRUPTCY AND YOU HAVE NOT REAFFIRMED THE DEBT, THIS NOTICE IS FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES ONLY AND SHOULD NOT BE CONSTRUED AS AN ATTEMPT TO COLLECT A DEBT FROM YOU PERSONALLY. Dated: December 8, 2025 Attorney for the party foreclosing the Mortgage: Thomas E. McDonald (P39312) Brock & Scott, PLLC 5431 Oleander Drive Wilmington, NC 28403 PHONE: (844) 856-6646 File No. 25-32312. (12-13)(01-03)

Notice of Foreclosure by Advertisement Notice is given under section 3212 of the revised judicature act of 1961, 1961 PA 236, MCL 600.3212, that the following mortgage will be foreclosed by a sale of the mortgaged premises, or some part of them, at a public auction sale to the highest bidder for cash or cashier's check at the place of holding the Circuit Court in Cass County, starting promptly at 10:00 AM, on January 7, 2026. The amount due on the mortgage may be greater on the day of the sale. Placing the highest bid at the sale does not automatically entitle the purchaser to free and clear ownership of the property. A potential purchaser is encouraged to contact the county register of deeds office or a title insurance company, either of which may charge a fee for this information. Name(s) of the mortgagor(s): Donald Gordan Davies, III, Married Man Original Mortgagee: Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc., as mortgagee, as nominee for Churchill Mortgage Corporation, its successors and assigns Foreclosing Assignee: PennyMac Loan Services, LLC Date of Mortgage: November 17, 2023 Date of Mortgage Recording: November 29, 2023 Amount claimed due on mortgage on the date of notice: $176,696.64 Description of the mortgaged premises: Situated in the Village of Vandalia, Cass County, Michigan, and are described as: Beginning at a point which is 507.5 feet South of the Southeast corner of State and Maple Streets in Section 26, Township 6 South, Range 14 West; thence East 300.5 feet; thence South 132 feet; thence West 300.5 feet to the East Line of Maple Street; thence North 132 feet to the Place of Beginning. Commonly Known as: 60795 Maple St., Vandalia, MI 49095 The redemption period shall be 6 months from the date of such sale, unless determined abandoned in accordance with MCL 600.3241a, in which case the redemption period shall be 30 days from the date of such sale, or upon the expiration of the notice required by MCL 600.3241a(c), whichever is later; or unless MCL 600.3240(16) applies. If the property is sold at foreclosure sale under Chapter 32 of the Revised Judicature Act of 1961, under MCL 600.3278, the borrower will be held responsible to the person who buys the property at the mortgage foreclosure sale or to the mortgage holder for damaging the property during the redemption period. Attention Purchaser: This sale may be rescinded by the foreclosing mortgagee for any reason. In that event, your damages, if any, shall be limited solely to the return of the bid amount tendered at sale, plus interest, and the purchaser shall have no further recourse against the Mortgagor, the Mortgagee, or the Mortgagee's attorney. Attention homeowner: If you are a military service member on active duty, if your period of active duty has concluded less than 90 days ago, or if you have been ordered to active duty, please contact the attorney for the party foreclosing the mortgage at the telephone number stated in this notice. This notice is from a debt collector. Date of notice: 12/06/2025 Potestivo & Associates, P.C. 251 Diversion Street, Rochester, MI 48307 248-853-4400 319660 (12-06)(12-27)

Attention homeowner: If you are a military service member on active duty, if your period of active duty has concluded less than 90 days ago, or if you have been ordered to active duty, please contact the attorney for the party foreclosing the mortgage at the telephone number stated in this notice.
Notice of foreclosure by advertisement. Notice is given under section 3212 of the revised judicature act of 1961, 1961 PA 236, MCL 600.3212, that the following mortgage will be foreclosed by a sale of the mortgaged premises, or some part of them, at a public auction sale to the highest bidder for cash or cashier's check at the place of holding the circuit court in Cass County, starting promptly at 10:00 AM on JANUARY 7, 2026. The amount due on the mortgage may be greater on the day of the sale. Placing the highest bid at the sale does not automatically entitle the purchaser to free and clear ownership of the property. A potential purchaser is encouraged to contact the county register of deeds office or a title insurance company, either of which may charge a fee for this information.
Default has been made in the conditions of a mortgage made by Joshua A. Hernandez and Laura E. Hernandez, husband and wife, to Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc., as nominee for Mortgage Research Center, LLC dba Veterans United Home Loans, Mortgagee, dated August 11, 2021 and recorded August 20, 2021 in Liber 1202, Page 232 and Loan Modification Agreement recorded on May 1, 2023, in Liber 1231, Page 2419, Cass County Records, Michigan. Said mortgage is now held by The Secretary of Veterans Affairs, an officer of the United States, by assignment. There is claimed to be due at the date hereof the sum of One Hundred Eighty-One Thousand Three Hundred Eight and 3/100 Dollars ($181,308.03).
Under the power of sale contained in said mortgage and the statute in such case made and provided, notice is hereby given that said mortgage will be foreclosed by a sale of the mortgaged premises, or some part of them, at public vendue at the place of holding the circuit court within Cass County, Michigan at 10:00 AM on JANUARY 7, 2026.
Said premises are located in the Township of Howard, Cass County Michigan, and are described as:
Lot 5 in Misty Acres, according to the plat thereof recorded in Liber 1-H of plats, Page 395, Cass County Records.
2202 Invicta Drive, Niles, Michigan 49120
The redemption period shall be 6 months from the date of such sale, unless determined abandoned in accordance with MCLA §600.3241a, in which case the redemption period shall be 30 days from the date of such sale.
If the property is sold at foreclosure sale, pursuant to MCL 600.3278, the borrower will be held responsible to the person who buys the property at the mortgage foreclosure sale or to the mortgage holder for damage to the property during the redemption period.
Dated: November 29, 2025
File No. 25-013858
Firm Name: Orlans Law Group PLLC
Firm Address: 1650 West Big Beaver Road, Troy MI 48084
Firm Phone Number: (248) 502.1400 (11-29)(12-20)

SILVER CREEK TOWNSHIP ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS
VARIANCE REQUEST, PUBLIC HEARING AND MEETING NOTICE

TO: THE RESIDENTS AND PROPERTY OWNERS OF THE TOWNSHIP OF SILVER CREEK, CASS COUNTY, MICHIGAN, AND ANY OTHER INTERESTED PERSONS:

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that the Silver Creek Township Zoning Board of Appeals will hold a public hearing and meeting on January 7, 2026, commencing at 7:00 p.m. at the Silver Creek Township Hall, 32764 Dixon Street, Dowagiac, MI 49047, within the Township.

PLEASE TAKE FURTHER NOTICE that the item(s) to be considered at said meeting are as follows:

· The request of Mark Mantel regarding the property at 31266 Currans Beach Road Dowagiac, MI (Parcel No. 14-130-342-081-00) in the "WD" Waterfront Residential District Zoning Classification for variances to permit the construction a new 22' x 32' garage on the vacant parcel across Currans Beach Road from the house with dimensions of 50' x 25' as follows:
**o** A 28.4' variance from the 30' required front yard setback in order to permit construction of the proposed garage 1.6 feet from the road right-of-way; and
**o** a 6-foot variance from the required 7- foot rear yard setback in order to permit construction of the proposed garage approximately 1 foot from the rear property line; and
**o** A 26% variance from the 30% maximum lot coverage in order to the proposed garage to cover 56 % of the parcel.
Standards of review for consideration by the Zoning Board of Appeals are contained in Section 155.253 of the Silver Creek Township Zoning Ordinance.

· Such other and further matters as may properly come before the zoning board of appeals.

Anyone interested in reviewing the application for the above or the Township Zoning Ordinance may examine a copy of the same at the Silver Creek Township Hall during regular business hours of regular business days hereafter until noon on the date of the hearing and may further examine the same at said public hearing/meeting. The Township Zoning Ordinance is also accessible via internet at www.silvercreektwpmi.gov.
Written comments will be received from any interested persons concerning the foregoing by the Silver Creek Township Clerk at the Township Hall at any time during regular business hours up to the date of the hearing and may be further received by the Zoning Board of Appeals at the hearing.
All interested persons are invited to be present at the aforesaid time and place.
Silver Creek Township will provide necessary reasonable auxiliary aids and services, such as signers for the hearing impaired and audio tapes of printed material
being considered at the hearing, to individuals with disabilities at the hearing upon four (4) days' notice to the Silver Creek Township Clerk. Individuals with disabilities requiring auxiliary aids or services should contact the Silver Creek Township Clerk at the address or telephone number listed below.
SILVER CREEK TOWNSHIP ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS
By: Jess Honn, Township Clerk
32764 Dixon St., Dowagiac, MI 49047
ph: (269)424-3025 email: www.silvercreektwpmi.gov

Notice of Foreclosure by Advertisement
Notice is given under section 3212 of the revised judicature act of 1961, 1961 PA 236, MCL 600.3212, that the following mortgage will be foreclosed by a sale of the mortgaged premises, or some part of them, at a public auction sale to the highest bidder for cash or cashier's check at the place of holding the circuit court in Cass County, starting promptly at 10:00 AM, on January 7, 2026. The amount due on the mortgage may be greater on the day of sale. Placing the highest bid at the sale does not automatically entitle the purchaser to free and clear ownership of the property. A potential purchaser is encouraged to contact the county register of deeds office or a title insurance company, either of which may charge a fee for this information:
Name(s) of the mortgagor(s): Micah J. Tartt, a married man and Karrie Tartt, his wife and Christine Rae Davis, an unmarried woman
Original Mortgagee: Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc., as nominee for lender and lender's successors and/or assigns
Foreclosing Assignee (if any): Wells Fargo Bank, N.A.
Date of Mortgage: July 10, 2003
Date of Mortgage Recording: July 14, 2003
Amount claimed due on date of notice: $36,364.03
Description of the mortgaged premises: Situated in City of Dowagiac, Cass County, Michigan, and described as: LOT NUMBERED FOURTEEN (14) HARTER, ANDREWS AND BLISH ADDITION TO THE PLAT THEREOF AS RECORDED IN
LIBER 34 OF DEEDS, PAGE 136, CASS COUNTY RECORDS.
Common street address (if any): 116 E Railroad St, Dowagiac, MI 49047-1448
The redemption period shall be 6 months from the date of such sale, unless determined abandoned in accordance with MCL 600.3241a; or, if the subject real property is used for agricultural purposes as defined by MCL 600.3240(16).
If the property is sold at foreclosure sale under Chapter 32 of the Revised Judicature Act of 1961, pursuant to MCL 600.3278 the borrower will be held responsible to the person who buys the property at the mortgage
foreclosure sale or to the mortgage holder for damaging the property during the redemption period.
Attention homeowner: If you are a military service member on active duty, if your period of active duty has concluded less than 90 days ago, or if you have been ordered to active duty, please contact the attorney for the party foreclosing the mortgage at the telephone number stated in this notice.
This notice is from a debt collector.
Date of notice: December 6, 2025
Trott Law, P.C.
31440 Northwestern Hwy, Suite 145
Farmington Hills, MI 48334
(248)642-2515 1578472 (12-06)(12-27)

FORECLOSURE NOTICE (ALL COUNTIES) AS A DEBT COLLECTOR, WE ARE ATTEMPTING TO COLLECT A DEBT AND ANY INFORMATION OBTAINED WILL BE USED FOR THAT PURPOSE. ATTENTION HOMEOWNER: IF YOU ARE A MILITARY SERVICE MEMBER ON ACTIVE DUTY, IF YOUR PERIOD OF ACTIVE DUTY HAS CONCLUDED LESS THAN 90 DAYS AGO, OR IF YOU HAVE BEEN ORDERED TO ACTIVE DUTY, PLEASE CONTACT THE ATTORNEY FOR THE PARTY FORECLOSING THE MORTGAGE AT THE TELEPHONE NUMBER STATED IN THIS NOTICE. Notice of Foreclosure by Advertisement – Notice is given under section 3212 of the revised judicature act of 1961, 1961 PA 236, MCL 600.3212, that the following mortgage will be foreclosed by a sale of the mortgaged premises, or some part of them, at a public auction sale to the highest bidder for cash or cashier's check at the place of holding the circuit court in Cass County, starting promptly at 10:00 AM a.m./p.m. on January 21, 2026. The amount due on the mortgage may be greater on the day of the sale. Placing the highest bid at the sale does not automatically entitle the purchaser to free and clear ownership of the property. A potential purchaser is encouraged to contact the county register of deeds office or a title insurance company, either of which may charge a fee for this information. Default having been made in the terms and conditions of a certain mortgage made by Eddie L Adkins, and Paula L Adkins of Cass County, Michigan, Mortgagor to Notre Dame Federal Credit Union dated the 9th day of February, 2022, and recorded in the office of the Register of Deeds, for the County of Cass and State of Michigan, on the 18th day of November, 2025, Liber 1268, Page 2039, of the Cass County Records on which mortgage there is claimed to be due, at the date of this notice, for principal of $36,267.38 plus accrued interest at 7.50000% percent per annum. Which said premises are described as follows: All that certain piece or parcel of land situated in the Township of Milton, in the County of Cass and State of Michigan and described as follows to wit: Part of the Northeast 1/4 of Section 14. Town 8 South, Range 16 West, described as: Beginning at the North 1/4 comer of Section 14; thence South 89 degrees 56` 00" East along the North line of said Section 249.00 feel; thence South 0 degrees 04` 00" West at right angles to said North line 327.00 feet; thence North 89 degrees 56` 00" West 248.60 feet to the North and South 1/4 line of said Section; thence North along said 1/4 line 327.00 feet to the point of beginning. Being subject to that portion along the North and West sides thereof as being used for highway purposes. Commonly known as: 70051 Brush Road, Niles, MI 49120 Tax ID: 14-070-014-003-50 If the property is sold at a foreclosure sale the borrower, pursuant to MCLA 600.3278 will be held responsible to the person who buys the property at the mortgage foreclosure sale or to the mortgage holder for damaging the property during the redemption period. The redemption period shall be six months from the date of such sale, unless determined abandoned in accordance with MCL 600.3241a, in which case the redemption period shall be 30 days from the date of such sale. Dated: December 20, 2025 By: Benjamin N. Hoen #P-81415 Weltman, Weinberg & Reis Co., L.P.A. 5990 West Creek Road, Suite 200 Independence, OH 44131 Telephone: 216-739-5100 Fax: 216-363-4034 Email: bhoen@weltman.com WWR#: 25-000827-1. (12-20)(01-10)

**Economy Storage, 2206 Yankee Street, Niles, MI 49120.**
**Auction Saturday December 27, 2025 at 10:00 a.m.**

| Unit # | Name | Unit # | Name |
|---|---|---|---|
| 9/185 | Candy Whitmire. | 10 | Charmin Kelly |
| 12 | Michael Purdy. | 22 | Amber Bedenfield |
| 28 | Emalee Anderson. | 57 | Caleb Dubik |
| 67 | Jerome Jankowiak | 77 | Stoney Tittle |
| 82 | Erica Pitone | 92 | Robert Procopi |
| 94 | Joshua Thompson | 95 | Bobbie Epps |
| 109 | David Jann. | 116 | Melissa Kaeding |
| 127/633 | Chris Norris | 145/467/468 | Michael Merritt |
| 148 | Gloster Johnson | 164 | Bradley Hattenback |
| 184/66 | Mary Anderson | 189 | Cassandrta Cannon |
| 191 | Alan Smith. | 192 | Patricia Yoder |
| 196 | Colton Wedgworth | 222 | Jon & Ruth Brown |
| 223 | Derek Baker | 228/367 | Shawnette Booker |
| 239 | Lyman Griffin | 240 | Teyshawn Wallace |
| 268 | Dan Hoft | 272 | Kurt Shepard |
| 273 | Tony Pompey | 278 | Chelsie Carlyle |
| 284 | Kathleen Peterson | 305 | Diane Bomke |
| 323 | Delaine Croom/Kaitlyn Boyd | 324 | Woodrow Bowers |
| 331 | Valerie Outlaw | 342 | Terrence Moss |
| 346 | DaMonica Williams | 356 | Chase Molica |
| 379 | Bobbie Helms | 386 | Shannon Lego |
| 389 | Parnell Jenkins | 398 | Andre Love |
| 399 | Les Hart. | 410/534 | Rebecca Coleman |
| 416 | Heidi Arbri | 429 | Aaron Haynes |
| 442 | Dawn Hojara | 451 | Jean Fitch |
| 452 | Tyler Mahar | 492/676 | Malawi Association |
| 515 | Danielle Flenar | 525 | Rick Nobles |
| 530 | Justin Landis | 541 | Nicole Hurt |
| 545 | Candy Whitmire | 556 | Matt Mazingo |
| 606 | Zoltan Kovach | 608 | Robert Conner |
| 638 | Britney Stanczyk | 665 | Rodney Prescott |
| 677/567 | Julie Potate | | |

**Niles U-Stor-It, 1314 E. Main Street, Niles, MI 49120.**
**Auction Saturday December 27, 2025 at 10:30 a.m.**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 13 | Michael Purdy. | 23 | Miranda Wendzel |
| 54 | Cynthia Swisher | 57 | Nathan Haynes |

**J & J Storage, 2220 S. 13th Street and**
**2627 S. 11th Street, Niles, MI 49120.**
**Auction Saturday December 27, 2025 at 11:00 a.m.**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 57 | James Colburn. | 200A | Mike Nidiffer |
| 233A | Donna Lawton | 301A | Matt Mazingo |
| 140 | Ronnie West | 168 | Jerol Williams Jr. |
| 197 | James Bennett | 230 | Felisha Liberty |
| 238/466 | James Diss | 250 | Robert Clayton/Jessica Vissik |
| 263 | Tamara Holmes | 292 | The Woodshed Crafts |
| 327 | Robert Davis | 346 | Joe Jones |
| 373 | Rhonda Sue Outlaw | 377 | Christy Stevens |
| 481 | Natosha Libertowski | 483 | Michael Donoho |

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SUBSCRIBE TODAY!
Call 269-429-1396

# OUTDOORS

### Submitting hunting or fishing photos

Have a behemoth buck, a tremendous turkey or super-sized salmon? Please submit photos to sports@TheHP.com.

Your photo must be in focus, all persons in the photo must be identified, and the general location of the hunt must be provided (for example, 10-point buck shot in Benton Township, black bear shot near Munising, Mich., etc.)

**Sarett Nature Center**

**Sarett Nature Stewards:** 2-4 p.m. each Wednesday. This program is a way to experience Sarett in a whole different way. By being a nature steward you are helping Sarett but you also gain a sense of well-being. Sarett's crew will teach you many different skills such as collecting viable seeds for future planting, how to identify invasive species from native ones, removing invasive plants, and more. For ages 10 and older.

**Audubon Christmas Bird Count:** 8 a.m.-5 p.m. Dec. 30. Sarett is looking for volunteers to count birds as a part of Audubon's annual Christmas Bird Count event to create a census of birds. Volunteers will cover a portion of the official count area and drive around to tally up all the birds they see. To volunteer, please call (269) 927-4832 ext. 102 or email Mike at mikem@sarett.org.

*Email info for Get Outdoors to sports@TheHP.com, or call 429-1294 by Monday.*

# Ancient lake from ice age comes back to life in Death Valley after record rainfall

**By SUMMER LIN**
Los Angeles Times (TNS)

Between 128,000 and 186,000 years ago, when ice covered the Sierra Nevada, a lake 100 miles long and 600 feet deep sat in eastern California in what is now the Mojave Desert.

As the climate warmed and the ice retreated, the lake dried up, leaving a white salt pan in its place.

But a November of record rainfall has brought the ancient lake, known as Lake Manly, back to life. Now Death Valley, one of the hottest places on Earth and the lowest point in North America, has a desert lake framed by snow-capped mountains.

As far as lakes go, this one is pretty small and is likely to disappear soon.

But it's a marvel to people who live in or visit Death Valley, and a reminder of the extreme weather that has been hitting the area more than 200 feet below sea level.

Climate change has been a growing concern. A few years ago, when temperatures approached the 130-degree mark, "heat tourists" flocked to the desert. Officials have expressed concern about how hotter conditions can affect the plants, birds and wildlife.

Then, there is the rain.

From September to November, the park received 2.41 inches of rain, with 1.76 inches of that total coming in November alone, the Park Service said. The previous wettest November on record was 1.70 inches, set in 1923.

The lake last made an appearance in 2023 after Hurricane Hilary, which degraded to a post-tropical low before reaching Southern California, dumped 2.2 inches of rain on the park and filled the basin.

Water levels receded until February 2024, when an atmospheric river dumped an additional 1.5 inches of rain onto the lake, making it deep enough that people could kayak on it. NASA researchers found that the temporary lake was about 3 feet to less than 1.5 feet deep over the course of about six weeks in February and March 2024.

The lake there today doesn't really compare, locals say.

"It's an attraction but it's not really a lake," said an employee at the Death Valley Inn, who asked to be identified only as Katt, when reached by phone Thursday. "It's the size of a lake but it's not deep. ... It's more like a very, very large riverbed without the flow – a wading pool maybe."

Regardless of its size, the novelty of the lake is an attraction unto itself.

The inn has gotten more visitors since the rains, Katt said, because the hotel is only about seven miles from the park entrance and isn't as expensive as the hotels inside its boundaries.

She said that business has increased 20 percent to 30 percent since the lake reappeared.

When the lake last emerged in 2023, the inn sold out for a few nights, she said. She has visited it herself recently and said the water went up to her knee in some spots.

The recent storms have also closed roads throughout the park, covering paved roads in debris and making them impassable, according to a National Park Service news release. Zabriskie Point, Dante's View, Badwater Basin and Mesquite Sand Dunes remain accessible and open.

Visitors should proceed with caution if traveling on back-country roads and be prepared to self-rescue if necessary, officials said.

The lake is much smaller compared with previous years, and there's no way to tell how long it will last, said Death Valley park ranger Nichole Andler.

She said that how long the lake is there depends on how much wind Death Valley gets, how warm it'll be and if it rains again anytime soon. Visitors can expect to see the lake into the new year and maybe a little longer because temperatures have been cool.

"Some of the best views of the lake are from Dante's View, and sunrise is a great time to see it," Andler added.

Death Valley gets only about 2 inches of rain per year because of rain shadows from mountains. The towering Sierra Nevada range stops moisture from coming in from the Pacific, causing most rain to fall on the other side of the mountains.

Death Valley's low elevation means that any rainfall that does arrive usually evaporates due to the heat.

Robert Gauthier / . Los Angeles Times / TNS

**People wade in the calm waters of Lake Manly in Badwater Basin in February 2024.**

Photos by Ryan Yuenger / HP correspondent

**Winter came early this fall, with snow covering the landscape before some leaves had a chance to change color.**

# Winter madness in the fall

Winter arrived early this year, and so did my battle with seasonal depression.

The first couple November snowstorms are always so fresh and exciting – the way the crunchy snow reflects off streetlights and Christmas decorations makes an for a delightful evening walk around St. Joseph.

**Ryan Yuenger**

When the cold late fall nights set in, the thought of shoveling a foot of snow from my driveway seems like a wonderful winter workout opportunity to keep winter madness at bay.

Then, I remember my sworn enemy – the City of St. Joseph plows.

Every year after the first big storm, these behemoths try to bury my driveway entrance, my sidewalk and my happiness under three feet of icy sludge.

Coming home from my parents house across the state after Thanksgiving weekend, all delightful notions of snow shoveling went up in smoke. I spent about 4 hours digging myself into my own driveway so I could unload my car.

While the city plows are a formidable foe for a man like me without a snowblower, they are not the biggest obstacle in my quest against winter depression.

That obstacle comes every year, on the first Sunday of November.

**Silver Beach sits empty on a day when wind chills dipped well below zero last weekend.**

**Snowy branches clash with fall leaves at Grand Mere State Park in November.**

### A lament of Daylight Saving

Most of my life, I was under the impression Daylight Saving Time had something to do with farmers. Perhaps they wanted to sleep in a little more, or maybe they wanted to work later at night.

Either way, it made no sense to me. Livestock animals and crops don't care what time it is, they just follow the sun. So why would farmers want to change the clocks and disrupt the natural order?

It turns out, they didn't. The U.S. agriculture industry has lobbied against Daylight Saving Time legislation since policies were first enacted during World War I. The idea back then was to conserve fuel used for artificial lighting by aligning the work day more with the natural sunlight.

Despite conflicting accounts of whether or not the energy-saving tactic actually worked, and against the farmers' wishes, we continue adjusting our clocks twice a year because Uncle Sam said so.

Early discussion of daylight saving can be traced to Benjamin Franklin, who in 1784 satirically suggested Parisians wake with the sun rather than sleeping late, so they could stop wasting sunlight and burning costly candles.

However, all the energy I just wasted researching the history of Daylight Saving Time probably offset all the energy savings gained from saving so much daylight through the years.

Think about that for a second. If it doesn't make sense, that's okay. I've clearly lost my marbles, and Daylight Saving Time laws are to blame.

These laws are the reason I'm indoors at 5 p.m. on a Sunday researching U.S. history instead of enjoying outdoor activities. For this reason, they should be repealed.

I expect an executive order posthaste, Mr. President.

### Winter winds

Even on non-work days, outdoor adventures during sunlight hours become much more difficult in winter. This past Saturday, strong winds off Lake Michigan had wind chill levels well below zero.

Determined to take my usual sunset walk along the bluff, I began my deep winter ritual – a layering process that takes no less than 20 minutes. It begins with two pairs of socks, two pairs of underwear, long johns and a long sleeve T-shirt as a base layer. Then comes my hiking pants, sweatshirt, balaclava, wool hat, wool scarf, wool-lined winter coat and two pairs of gloves for extra insulation.

Once I'm feeling like Ralphie's little brother in A Christmas Story, I waddle out my front door and into the battle for seasonal sanity.

Almost immediately on Saturday's walk, my glasses fogged up from my war, breath escaping up the scarf. I continued down the street, partially blinded and stepping lightly to avoid the now-shrouded patches of ice along the city's many unshoveled sidewalks.

I eventually traversed the ice and arrived at the shore, where the dry wind wiped the fog from my glasses. With a clean field of vision, I noticed I was the only person at Silver Beach, and I soon understood why.

Stinging bits of icy sand peppered my clothes as wind gusts knocked me off balance. The small bits of exposed skin around my eyes started to feel like they were going to fall off, so I defeatedly turned around and headed back up the bluff toward home.

The wind still howled as I walked alone through the city's Light Up the Bluff display. I took a moment to appreciate the treacherous-yet-tranquil scene – it's a peaceful feeling being the only one outside in this oft-bustling beach community.

At the same time, I was realizing I might actually be insane for trying to brave the outdoors in such harsh conditions. The most troubling part – it's not even officially winter yet, and conditions will undoubtedly get worse out there.

Perhaps this year I'll join a gym to reclaim my seasonal sanity.

*Ryan Yuenger is an HP correspondent. Send him ideas of where to hike next at ryuenger@thehp.com.*

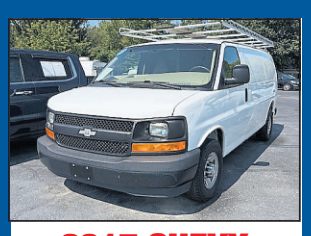
# DEALS ON WHEELS

$0 DOWN

## BLACK FRIDAY WHOLESALE TAGS!! UNTIL DEC. 31, 2025

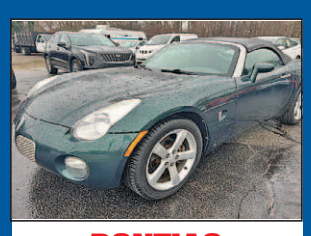
**2014 CHRYSLER TOWN & COUNTRY**
Just in!! Fully service and ready to go
**Only $6,900**

**2016 BUICK LACROSSE**
Like New, Loaded, Super low miles
**Wholesale $13,300**

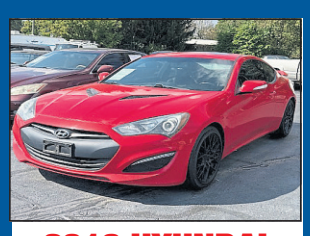


**2017 CHEVY EXPRESS 2500**
Cargo rack, full power options
**Wholesale $13,700**

**2018 CHEVY EQUINOX AWD**
Here is your present...
**Wholesale Pricing**
**Only $13,850**



**PONTIAC SOLSTICE**
Low miles, great shape... Nice car to drive to car shows.
**Only $13,900**



**2013 HYUNDAI GENESIS COUPE**
Very rare, R-track pack
**Only $13,900**

**2019 DODGE CARAVAN SXT**
Wholesale to EV-ERYONE!
**MERRY CHRISTMAS**
**Wholesale $14,600**

**2018 FORD EXPLORER**
Save thousands!
**Wholesale $14,620**

**2003 FORD THUNDERBIRD**
Just in!! Showroom new
**Only $14,900**

**2018 CHRYSLER PACIFICA TOURING**
Just in! 7 passenger, full power options
**Wholesale $17,900**

**2019 KIA STINGER GT**
It goes like a bat out of Haiti
**Wholesale $18,700**

**2019 HONDA HRV AWD**
Wholesale priced
**Wholesale $19,125**

**2024 NISSAN SENTRA**
Just in!! Like new for less!
**Wholesale $19,775**

**2022 KEYSTONE CT3400**
Like new but half the price
**Wholesale $22,200**

**2023 TOYOTA COROLLA SE**
Just in!! Only 13k miles.
**Wholesale $22,775**

**2021 CHRYSLER PACIFICA**
Just in!! Low miles.
**Wholesale $23,700**

**2022 CHEVY COLORADO EX-CAB 4 X 4**
Wholesale deal!!
**Wholesale $24,400**

**2024 FORD EDGE SEL**
All wheel drive, low miles
**Wholesale $24,800**

**2023 CHEVY TRAILBLAZER LT AWD**
Just in!! Off lease, 1 owner, super low miles. Retail book $28,800
**Wholesale $25,900**

**2021 CHEVY SILVERADO LT TRAIL BOSS**
Just in!!
**Wholesale $24,400**

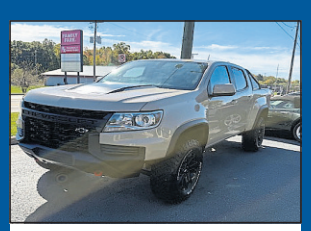
**2022 RAM 2500 HIGHTOP PROMASTER**
Low miles, Wholesale priced
**Wholesale $27,325**

**2021 KIA TELLURIDE EX**
Just In!! Low Miles
**Wholesale $27,700**

**2025 CHEVY TRAX ACTIV**
Just In! Like New for Less!
**Wholesale $28,850**

**2023 CHRYSLER 300**
Just in, off lease. 12,000 miles with every option
**Wholesale $29,800**

**2023 HONDA RIDGELINE RTL**
Just In! Every option, save thousands!
**Wholesale $31,900**



**2022 CHEVY COLORADO**
Just in!! Low miles and a low price
**Wholesale $34,425**

**2020 CHEVY TAHOE LT**
Just in and wholesale priced to move out
**Wholesale $34,800**

**2024 FORD E-350 CARGO**
16ft box trucks with miles in the 40's. Like new for half the price. 2 left!
**Wholesale $37,900**

**2022 CHEVY SILVERADO HIGH COUNTRY**
Every Option, only 19,000 miles!
**Wholesale $48,125**

**2024 FORD F-350 CREW XLT 4X4**
Dually, diesel and mint condition!
**Wholesale $58,750**

## SEE A STAR IT'S A 1 OWNER CAR
## 269-783-3325 • M-51 DOWAGIAC